



Volume XXXI, Issue No. 133
WEDNESDAY JULY 7, 2021
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\$1

Bronze Star awarded to Iraq and Afghanistan veteran

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
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REPORTER

Saipan resident Lt. Col. Albert S. Flores Jr., who is a decorated Iraq and Afghanistan combat veteran, a U.S. Marine Corps reservist,

and a father, was presented with a Bronze Star medal yesterday at the American Memorial Park's Court of Honor and Flag Circle, surrounded by his family and friends.

The medal, which honored Flores' role in military operations in Afghanistan from Oc-

tober 2019 to October 2020, was presented to him by U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Mark Hashimoto, who is visiting the CNMI from the Marine Pacific Command in Hawaii. Joining Flores and Hashimoto was U.S. Indo-Pacific

See BRONZE on Page 4

Lt. Col. Albert S. Flores Jr., in uniform and first from left, is joined by friends, family, and colleagues in a group photo after being presented his Bronze Star medal at the American Memorial Park's Court of Honor and Flag Circle on July 6. The Bronze Star Medal was presented to Flores to honor his role in military operations in Afghanistan from October 2019 to October 2020.

JOSHUA SANTOS

Over 6,000 receive LWA

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor reports that over 6,000 individuals have received Lost Wages Assistance, a federal program that gives \$300 to those who've already been approved

to receive unemployment benefits and were unemployed or working fewer hours due to disruptions caused by COVID-19.

As of April, CNMI DOL says it has paid off over 6,300 individuals who were qualified for the \$300 payment a week for the week ending Aug. 1, Aug. 8, and/

or Aug. 15, 2020.

However, individuals who qualify and have yet to re-

ceive a payment can still claim their LWA but the deadline for submission of claims is July 20, 2021.

For those who want to submit a claim, send your name

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Terminated firefighters speak in court

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The nine firefighters who were sacked after refusing to be vaccinated against COVID-19 took the stand yesterday in Superior Court to plead their case that they be reinstated in their jobs while their case against the CNMI government is ongoing.

During a hearing yesterday, Associate Judge Joseph

Camacho allowed eight out of nine firefighters to take the stand to explain, in their own

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'Torres' utility bills for 5 mos. after Yutu reached \$6,630'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' utility bills in the five months after Super Typhoon Yutu's devastation on Saipan in October 2018 totaled \$6,630 and the governor paid it in cash and was sub-

sequently reimbursed by the government.

This was learned during the testimony yesterday of Department of Finance's finance and accounting director Bernadita C. Palacios, who testified about Torres' residential utilities before the House Judiciary and

Governmental Operations Committee that is investigating the governor's and first lady's travels and expenses.

Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) showed Palacios a copy of a request to reimburse Torres for his residential utilities dated March 14,

See TORRES on Page 4

Woman is found guilty of defrauding USCIS. PAGE 3

FSM, Palau, RMI join WICHE. PAGE 6

AT A GLANCE

As of 8:35pm, July 6, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **65%**

Fully Vaccinated: **105**

Days since last community transmission **105**

Pfizer/BioNTech

Initiated: **25,472**

Fully Vaccinated: **23,318**

Moderna

Initiated: **4,129**

Fully Vaccinated: **3,887**

Janssen

Fully vaccinated: **451**

GUAM OLD NEW TOTAL

Positive **8,373 21 8,394**

Recovered **8,152 3 8,155**

Active **78 21 99**

Deaths **140 0 140**

Cumulative Number of Persons Tested **179,488**

SAIPAN OLD NEW TOTAL

Positive **184 0 184**

Traced via Travel Screening **148 0 148**

Traced via Community Screening **36 0 36**

Deaths **2 0 2**

Cumulative Number of Persons Tested **33,243***

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos steps down as CEO. In his place is Andy Jassy.

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NATION

Rescuers searched through fresh rubble after the last of the collapsed Florida condo was demolished.

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ASIA

Japan rescue workers dig through sludge and debris looking for more than 20 people.

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

House OKs Senate bill that requires special election to fill BOE vacancy

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives unanimously passed yesterday a Senate bill that will require a special election to fill a Board of Education vacancy.

Senate Bill 22-26, Senate Draft 1, authored by Sen. Justo S. Quitugua (R-Saipan), will also clarify when an elected member of the BOE must

resign from his or her Public School System employment.

All 18 representatives present voted "yes" to pass the legislation. Reps. Denita K. Yangetmai (D-Saipan) and Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saipan) were absent but excused from the session.

The bill now goes to the governor's office.

The House Committee on Education chaired by Rep.

Leila Staffler (D-Saipan) had recommended passing the bill.

Quitugua introduced the bill last Feb. 19. The Senate passed the legislation last March 12 and it was subsequently referred to the House Committee on Education.

Under the bill, any vacancy in the BOE caused by the death, resignation, or removal of an appointed member shall be filled in the same manner as the origi-

nal appointment to serve the unexpired term of that vacancy.

Upon a vacancy on the board caused by the death, resignation, or removal of an elected member, the governor shall appoint the candidate who received the next highest number of votes in the same election or district where the former board member was elected, regardless of the time remaining in the term of office.

If no candidate is interested in filling the vacancy or no person is certified as a candidate during a general election, a vacancy on the BOE shall be filled by a special election.

The Commonwealth Election Commission shall conduct a special election to fill such a vacancy within 30 days after a vacancy on the board is declared or the general election results are certified if no person is certified as a candidate during a general election.

Elected members who are

employed by the PSS, shall resign from their employment upon certification that they are duly elected as a member of the BOE by the Board of Elections.

In the event the appointed teacher representative is not able to serve the complete term, or resigns, the commissioner shall submit the name of the second candidate in the last run-off election to the governor to appoint as the new teacher representative to complete the remaining period of time.



New laws allot funds for Saipan projects, SHEFA, NI council

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, in his capacity as acting governor, signed last Friday three local laws that allocate a total of \$2.15 million for various infrastructure projects and scholarships on Saipan and the Northern Islands.

The three newly-enacted local laws are:

■ **House Local Bill 22-3, D1**, which appropriates \$695,177.85 of the Earned Bond Interest Income collected for the Third Senatorial District that has been identified by the Commonwealth Development Authority for road

improvements on Industrial Drive, completion of the Kalamendo Waterline Project and the Dotse Pl. Waterline Project, and water system improvements on Navy Hill Drive. This bill becomes Saipan Local Law 22-1.

■ **House Local Bill 22-7**, which appropriates \$1,446,000 from revenue collected pursuant to Saipan Local Law 11-2. A total of \$1,200,000 is allocated to the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance; \$200,000 for the Saipan Mayor's Office for field operations and the Saipan street naming project; and \$46,000 for the Northern Islands Mayor's Office operations. This bill becomes Saipan Local Law 22-2.

■ **House Local Bill 22-10**, which re-appropriates lapsed funds amounting to \$9,452 under Section 2(B)(5) of Saipan Local Law 21-5 for the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council. (PR)

Acting governor Arnold I. Palacios signs three appropriation bills for Saipan and the Northern Islands in the presence of House floor leader Ralph N. Yumul, Rep. John Paul P. Sablan, and Rep. Joseph A. Flores last Friday in the Lt. Governor's office.

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*Facilities and benefits are for the use of registered guests only

Woman is found guilty of defrauding USCIS

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

A 13-person jury unanimously found guilty yesterday afternoon a woman charged with defrauding U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The jury trial for Servillana

Soriano, who was charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States for her alleged involvement in a CW-1 petition scheme back in 2019, concluded yesterday with the guilty finding.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V.

Manglona, following the reading of the verdict, ordered Soriano to return to court on Nov. 12 at 9am to be sentenced.

Soriano's co-conspirators—Aminul Islam, Halim Khan, and Faroque Hose—were also charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the U.S.

Islam and Hosen have already pleaded guilty.

Back on Feb. 16, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona sentenced Islam to one-week imprisonment, one year of supervised release, and 25 hours of community service. He was also ordered to pay a \$100 assessment fee.

Hosen's sentencing is scheduled for July 23, 2021, at 1:30pm.

As for Halim Khan, his

jury trial will start on Aug. 29, 2021.

According to indictment, Soriano and her co-conspirators agreed to defraud the United States by deceitful and dishonest means for the purpose of impeding, impairing, obstructing, and defeating the lawful government functions of USCIS in the fair and objective evaluation of CW-1 non-immigrant visa applications.

The indictment stated that RES International LLC would submit a CW-1 petition on behalf of a foreign worker, in exchange for money, while

falsely and fraudulently representing that an employer-employee relationship exists between RES and the beneficiaries.

The primary purpose of the application was allegedly to obtain legal status for those beneficiaries.



Servillana Soriana walks out of the U.S District Court for the NMI yesterday soon after being found guilty of one count conspiracy to defraud the United States.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

NMTI summer program for middle schoolers underway

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute's summer program for 35 students from Tanapag Middle School is now underway, with the student spending the next four weeks gaining an understanding of the two courses they chose. By Week 5, they will be treated to multiple field trips and lead teach-back sessions with their peers.

The students, who began the summer program last June 29, were placed into five groups of seven and chose courses in culinary arts; electronics; carpentry; welding & heating; venting; air conditioning; and auto mechanic work.

Four weeks of the program will be dedicated to interactive classes in two courses of the students' choosing, with the students spending two weeks for each course. In the final week, NMTI will treat students to field trips, where they will be exposed to real-life applications of some of the things they learned.

According to NMTI interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao and Student Service coordinator Meena Benavente, plans for field trips to the Triple J Motors Saipan Service and Parts Center, one of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s power plants, Kensington Hotel Saipan and/or Aqua Resort Club Saipan, and the NMI Museum are in

the works.

Today, July 7, the students will be going on a field trip to Triple J Wholesale, where they will tour the facility and learn about its supply chain and more through the guidance of Triple J management, said Attao.

Attao said she wanted an outreach program for the youth, as they are more likely to be receptive and open to learning about trades profes-

sions and considering pursuing a trade in the future.

"We would like to expand and enhance their knowledge and [allow] them to apply all the skills that they will learn [through the summer program]. These kids are young, so they're very impressionable, and we're excited for them to really expand their horizons," she said.

NMTI's summer program will run until Aug. 2.



Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

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/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman

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Manglona says they can go over entire budget next week

House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona

(Ind-Rota) said yesterday that today, Wednesday, will be the last sched-

uled date for the budget hearing for four independent agencies.

The committee will hear the budget requests of the Office of the Public Auditor, Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Public Defender, and the Office of Personnel Management.

At the House's session yesterday, Manglona asked committee members to clear their schedule next week so they can go over the entire budget.

He said they are hoping to get something done by next Friday.

"So if any non-member is interest-

ed to sit in at any of the meetings next week to try to wrap your head around the changes that will be made and to clarify any questions you have, you're more than welcome to participate," he said.

He said it looks like the Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee has Tuesday and Thursday covered so they will try to schedule the hearing Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to look over the entire budget. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**



Manglona

Guam PTAC offers free webinars

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars this month. Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ July 8, 2021-Marketing to the Federal Government

The government buys products and services differently than the private sector. The Guam PTAC will discuss marketing strategies, essen-

tial documents, and how to get your company on "the list".

■ July 15, 2021-How to get HUBZone Certified

All of Guam and the CNMI are HUBZones. The Guam PTAC will take you through the certification process, the required supporting documents, and follow-up requirements from SBA.

■ July 22, 2021-How to get Women Owned Small Business Certified (WOSB)

WOSB is now an official certification program. We will discuss the certification program as well sup-

porting document requirements.

■ July 27, 2021-How to get 8(a) Certified

The SBA's 8(a) Program was created to help small, disadvantaged businesses compete in the federal procurement market. The Guam PTAC will help you navigate the forms and requirements of the 8a program.

■ July 29, 2021-SBA Mentor Protege Program

The SBA Mentor-Protege program is modeled after the 8(a) Mentor-Protege Program. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements and how to apply.

Register on <http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php>. **(PR)**



Reps. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) and Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) show documents to Department of Finance's finance and accounting director Bernadita C. Palacios during a short recess yesterday at the hearing before the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee. Also in the photo are lawyer Matthew Gregory and House legislative assistant Cameron Nicholas.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

TORRES

From Page 1

2019, which was submitted to Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig. The reimbursement request had been submitted by Shirley C. Ogunoro, acting assistant to the administration.

Sablan said that, according to the memo, the total reimbursement amount to Torres was \$6,630 covering the five-month period from October 2018 to February 2019.

"Interestingly, colleagues, this reimbursement request covers the period right after Super Typhoon Yutu when most homes on Saipan lacked utilities for weeks and even months," Sablan said.

In response to Sablan's questions, Palacios said it's her signature in the memo that certifies that funds were available to pay the utilities under the account of the Office of the Governor. Palacios said these were expenses incurred at the governor's private residence. The director said Torres was reimbursed for the entire amount.

Sablan showed a copy of what ap-

pears to be a printout from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s ledger for Torres' account that was attached to the reimbursement request. Palacios said the document indicated that the balance owed to the governor includes late penalty fees.

The director agreed with Sablan that Torres was also reimbursed by the government for paying the late fees.

Sablan also showed a receipt from CUC that was attached to the reimbursement request. Sablan said the CUC receipt indicates that \$6,700 was paid in cash and that change was given back in the amount of \$69.10.

"In your experience, have you ever seen any governor pay for his CUC bills with such a large sum of cash?" the lawmaker asked the witness, who replied, "No."

Sablan was curious if this did not strike Palacios as unusual. "I just find it's unusual, particularly since this governor apparently had access to so many credit cards," said Sablan.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said this is a period of five months—October 2018 to February 2019—

for reimbursement for residential utilities, water, sewer, and power. He pointed out that Saipan had no power for a couple of months after Yutu.

Breaking down the \$6,630 for each month of five months, that's comes down to \$1,326 for utility bills, Propst said.

"Now I can tell you that if the average person got this utility bill, they'll probably pass out," he said.

Propst said it's just quite unusual to consume that much power. "We live in a four-bedroom house and we average probably \$400 to \$500 a month. On a bad month, that's a high month. We try to keep it down," he said.

Propst said \$1,326 a month is astounding and that perhaps solar panels should be recommended if the government is going to be paying for the governor's power.

Palacios completed her testimony yesterday. She started testifying last Friday with her counsel, Matthew Gregory.

JGO chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said the hearing will continue tomorrow, Thursday, at 10am, but that there will be no witnesses.

LWA

From Page 1

and contact number to lwa@pa.gov, mp or call CNMI DOL at 323-8800 or 323-8801 from Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:30am and 4:30pm.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the LWA Program grant comes from Federal Emergency Management Agency and its in-

tended beneficiaries are workers who have had reduced hours due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19.

The same workers who already received Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program will also benefit from the LWA, according to DOL.

The CNMI was approved for \$7.7 million for LWA last Sept. 16, 2020.

LWA is an employment assistance program that receives funding from

FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund.

LWA allows distribution of an additional \$300 weekly supplement to individuals who received unemployment benefits and was implemented to replace the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance that expired in July 2020.

Eligible claimants don't have to apply for LWA because DOL went through its HireMarianas portal to determine LWA-eligible individuals to process payments.

BRONZE

From Page 1

Command liaison officer for the CNMI Maj. Joshua Kettenton, and Flores' family and friends.

In his brief remarks after receiving the medal, Flores said he wanted to be given his medal on Saipan so that his wife and children could see why he was gone for so long and to celebrate the achievement with him.

"This deployment was the hardest of my career. It was a long one, and

it was unexpected. ...We got the call that, in just two weeks I had to go and I had to leave home for 15 months, and [my wife] and I were not expecting that. We did it together, with her back home and me away, and the deployment itself was very challenging," said Flores.

The Bronze Star is a U.S. Armed Forces decoration awarded to those in the military who deserve recognition for either heroic achievement, heroic service, meritorious achievement, or meritorious service in a combat zone.

TERMINATED

From Page 1

words, why they believe the court should grant them a preliminary injunction that would reinstate them as Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services firefighters while their lawsuit against the department is pending.

A preliminary injunction is an order prohibiting an action, but in this case reversing an action and reinstating the nine, to preserve the status quo while the court decides on the lawsuit.

After hearing all their testimonies, Camacho placed the matter under advisement.

Most of the firefighters told the court that they believe the vaccine shouldn't be "forced" upon them because they fear unknown effects that could later arise years from now. They added that it's an "experimental vaccine" that has yet to be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Others said they should be able to decide what goes into their body. The FDA has granted "emergency use authorization" for the use of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson&Johnson vaccines.

According to Jose Angui, Paul Acebedo, Cain Castro, Philip Calen, and Argernon Flores, they want to wait until more studies have been done on the vaccines because it took less than a year of testing before it was pushed out into the world.

In addition, they said they were concerned about possible health problems down the road.

As a compromise, the firefighters said that if granted reinstatement, they would be more than fine with wearing protective gear during work hours and to be isolated from the community.

Another firefighter, Shawn Kaipat, shared that his refusal to get vacci-

nated stems from a traumatizing experience he had with vaccines during his time in the military. He said he developed an autoimmune deficiency years after getting an anthrax vaccine while serving as a U.S. Army soldier deployed to Bahrain in 2002.

"After getting the vaccine, I had no trouble with the vaccine. In 2008, after getting a mandatory flu vaccine with DFEMS, I became bedridden due to a sharp pain in my back that went misdiagnosed for months until I met with a Pacific Medical Center's physician, who diagnosed me with autoimmune deficiency. In 2012, I got an email from the Department of Defense recalling the anthrax shot because it was discovered to cause autoimmune deficiency, among other conditions, and everyone who were vaccinated were urged to get checked. That's when I put two and two together," he said.

Another firefighter, Derek Gersonde, also took the stand to share that one of his lungs collapsed 12 year ago, and since then, he has been extremely conscious about substances entering his body, especially substances that could affect his respiratory system.

Also sharing his opinions was Adam Safer, who claims he has done extensive research where he learned that the vaccine cannot be forced on anyone.

"There is not one federal department in the U.S that requires a COVID-19 vaccine. It's just funny that here, we're required to get one," he said.

In addition, he argued that they should be given the same exemption like individuals who claim they have religious restrictions.

"We're being prosecuted for not wanting to get the vaccine but someone gets to say they believe in God and not get vaccinated. It's unfair," he said.

No status conference has been set for the matter as of yesterday.



Bill will raise minimum sentence for sex crimes vs minors

Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian) has introduced a measure in the CNMI House of Representatives that would increase the mandatory minimum sentence for individuals convicted of sexual assault in the first degree and sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian) meets with Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence associate director Kiki Igitol Benjamin at the CNMI Legislature.

If enacted into law, House Bill 22-72 would amend the existing law by increasing the mandatory minimum sentence to 10 years for any person convicted of sexual assault in the first degree or sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree, if the person convicted has no record of a felony conviction. Currently, the mandatory minimum sentence is eight years.

"I introduced this bill in response to public outcry over the high rate of sexual violence in the Commonwealth, especially against

children," San Nicolas said.

According to the findings and purpose of House Bill 22-72: The Legislature... finds that high mandatory sentences would have a deterrent effect on sexual violence and that victims would be more likely to report if they believed that perpetrators would be sent to jail.

San Nicolas recently met with Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence associate director Kiki Igitol Benjamin to express his desire to partner with

the non-profit organization to bring about awareness about domestic violence against family members and sexual violence against children.

"I would like to thank Ms. Benjamin for taking the time to visit me. We discussed several legislative proposals in addition to House Bill 22-72. I look forward to meeting with other community stakeholders in our joint effort to help rid the Commonwealth of domestic and sexual violence," San Nicolas said. (PR)

5-year moratorium sought on *sali* hunting

Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian) has introduced a local bill that would prohibit for five years the hunting of the Micronesian starling—locally called the *pahuman sali*—in the second senatorial district of Tinian and Aguiguan.

The *sali* is known for spreading hot pepper or *doni* seeds throughout the northern part of Tinian. The Tinian *doni sali* is believed to be the spiciest hot pepper in Micronesia.

"There is a correlation between the survival of the *sali* and the survival of our Tinian *doni*. Indeed, gut-passed hot pepper seeds emerge sooner and at a higher proportion than seeds from the whole hot pepper. I have filed House Local Bill 22-15 in order to ensure the *doni sali* and *pahuman sali*'s abundance [on] Tinian," said San Nicolas.

According to HLB 22-15, the hunting of the Micronesian starling will be prohibited

on Tinian until Jan. 1, 2026. The resident department head of the Tinian Department of Lands and Natural Resources, in consultation with the CNMI director of Fish and Wildlife, will be tasked with the enforcement of the law.

"I applaud Congressman San Nicolas' vision for the continued bountiful harvest of the *doni sali* for present and future generations of hot pepper producers and consumers," said DLNR resident department head Guillermo C. Borja.

"As this is a local bill, the Tinian delegation will hold a public hearing to allow stakeholders such as *doni* producers, farmers and ranchers to provide input on the proposal," San Nicolas said.

The Pika Festival is held every February on Tinian to highlight and celebrate the unique heat and flavor of the Tinian hot pepper. (PR)

US Army Pacific sets annual exercise in Guam and Palau

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Army Pacific will host an annual expeditionary training event later this month in Guam and the Republic of Palau.

The training exercise will consist of a command post exercise, air and sea deployments of military equipment, beach landings, live-fire exercises, and airborne operations to further enhance readiness and demonstrate the military's full commitment to the security and stability of this region.

Residents are advised they may see or hear increased ground and road activity over the next month, as a result of the exercise.

Exercise participants in Guam will reside at U.S. Naval Base Guam facilities and in a tent camp on Andersen Air Force Base for the duration of the train-

ing when not involved in exercise-related operations outside of the installations. All COVID-19 mitigations will be strictly enforced in accordance with military and government of Guam public health pandemic policies.

Base patrons both on NBG and Andersen AFB should expect increased utilization of facilities to include base exchanges, commissaries, and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation. Additionally, motorists are reminded to practice caution due to an increase in pedestrians on the bases.

The U.S. Army, U.S. Army Pacific, and America's First Corps are fully committed to conducting realistic training to ensure troops are ready and prepared to execute multi-domain operations to support a free and open Indo-Pacific. (PR)

100 Days OF Summer

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FSM, Palau, RMI join WICHE

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

In 2012, the CNMI was the first member from the Pacific Western side of the United States—informally called the Blue Continent—to join the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Guam followed in 2016. Both the CNMI and Guam now welcomes the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands as the newest WICHE members.

Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs that shouldered their membership fees, these three countries—collectively called the Freely Associated States—now join the CNMI and Guam as members of WICHE, a Colorado-based non-profit organization that provide access to various student development programs and scholarships for college tuition and higher learning. Essentially, students from WICHE members get tuition discounts and scholarships in college.

In announcing the OIA grant award via an online press conference, WICHE president Demaree Michelau said the OIA grant will actually cover the membership cost for all

six U.S. Pacific territories and Freely Associated States in fiscal year 2022.

She said members benefits from the full range of WICHE programs that include student access programs, where students throughout the region can save substantially on college tuition.

"Our Pacific Island members each bring unique perspective and knowledge that will only strengthen the impact and value of post-secondary education across the West. This grant is a testament to the visionary leadership and collaboration across the [Blue Continent]. Together we can be trusted partners working to strengthen student access and success, as well as workforce in the region," she added.

Representing the CNMI at the online press conference were House Speaker Jude Hofschneider and press secretary Kevin Bautista. "Since our WICHE membership back in 2012 when I briefly served as lieutenant governor...I've seen it evolve and grow over time. Through that initiative, parents and students in the CNMI have achieved a lot of financial savings and, despite the setbacks—natural disasters and now the pandemic—

our partnership with WICHE it is still growing. We look forward to being partners with the rest of our Blue Continent brothers and sister as we forge ahead," Hofschneider said.

"As a result of our membership with WICHE, we were able to muster a couple of important legislations that I gladly authored and that is the creation of the Professional Student Exchange Program that allowed us to have some of our students in the medical field enrolled in the various WICHE partner schools. ... Under this program, we require that for every year that you get a support fee from the CNMI, you are to perform two years of service when you return..." he added.

Hofschneider also mentioned that he sponsored a bill that is now before the committee that creates a Behavioral Health Scholarship Program. "We have had good guidance from our partners at WICHE," he said.

Speaking in behalf of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres who is off-island, Bautista said that, as the first U.S. Pacific territory to join WICHE in 2012, the CNMI can attest to the benefits of being a WICHE member. "Here in the CNMI, WICHE has allowed local

families to save a total of \$3.5 million in tuition, a savings benefit that we feel should be extended to the entire Pacific Blue Continent ... This marks the start, a step in higher edu-

cational attainment for the Pacific," he added.

The online press conference was also attended by FSM president David W. Panuelo, Palau president Surangel

Whipps Jr., RMI president David Kabua, Guam vice speaker Tina Muna Rose Barnes, Guam Sen. Mary Camacho Torres, and Guam Sen. Amanda Shelton, among others.

New laws allot funds for Rota scholarships, medical beneficiaries



Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, center, is flanked by Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota), left, and Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), who are co-chairs of the Rota Legislative Delegation, soon after witnessing Palacios enact three appropriation bills for Rota in his capacity as acting governor last Friday in Palacios' office.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, in his capacity as acting governor, signed last Friday three Rota local bills into law that allocate funding the island's scholars and its medical beneficiaries.

House Local Bill 22-1, D1 appropriates \$60,000 for the Rota Municipal Scholarship Foundation. This bill becomes Rota Local Law 22-1.

House Local Bill 22-2, D1 appropriates \$60,000 from the Poker Licensing Fee Account for medical subsistence allowance for Rota hemodialysis and terminally-ill patients. This bill becomes Rota Local Law 22-2.

House Local Bill 22-6 appropriates \$21,272 for inter-island medical referral stipend

for Rota patients and their escorts. This bill becomes Rota Local Law 22-03.

Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) and Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), who are co-chairs of the Rota Legislative Delegation, witnessed the signing of the bills at Palacios' office at the Office of the Governor. (PR)

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Mount Carmel School will serve as a vaccination site on July 9

The COVID-19 vaccine will be administered at Mount Carmel School's Maturana Building this Friday, July 9, 2021, from 8am to 2pm. This is intended to make COVID-19 vaccines accessible for students, families, and community members prior to the start

of the 2021-2022 school year, according to the Commonwealth Health Center Corp.

On the day of the event, the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine will be administered to eligible individuals. Information on the vaccine is available at www.vaccinatecnmi.com.

While this event is primarily meant to help eligible Mount Carmel School students receive their vaccine prior to the start of the new school year, families and community members can arrive as walk-in participants on the day of the event. A specific code is required to register for the Mount Carmel School location.

Students under the age of 18 are required to have a signed consent form by the child's parent or guardian. The link to the consent form is available on www.vaccinatecnmi.com and the Mount Carmel School website, www.mount-carmelsaipan.com.

Walk-in appointments are accepted on the day of the event. To register, provide a valid government issued photo ID and an insurance card. However, insurance is not required.

Mount Carmel School's acting president Frances Taimanao shared the importance of making the vaccine available, especially prior to the start of the new school year. "Our top priority at Mount Carmel School has always been safety. While we continue to adjust to the new normal, we see the impact this pandemic has made on student learning and wellness. As we continue to prioritize safety,

we also need to move forward as a community, make vaccines accessible, and work towards reinstating normal school operations and events."

Taimanao added that the voice of parents also played a crucial role in making MCS a vaccination site. "We issued a survey to our families with students in the seventh through 12th grades and many families selected that they would register their child if the school were to make vaccines available on-site."

Taimanao explained why the early month of July is ideal to make the campus a vaccination site. "If students receive their vaccinations early this month, then they

will have completed the vaccination process prior to the start of the new school year. If we can prove that at least 80% of our students in grades seventh through 12th are vaccinated, our leadership team can work with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC to reasonably ease restrictions and keep students safe. Additionally, our team can continue to adjust and reinstate programs and events previously cancelled due to the pandemic."

To start the registration process, individuals can visit www.vaccinatecnmi.com or contact the vaccination call center at 670-682-7468. For more information, visit www.mountcarmelsaipan.com. (PR)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

FOA auditions for one-act plays

The Friends of the Arts will be producing a theater program of three one-act plays in early August. Auditions will be held today, July 7, from 2pm to 6pm, at Room D102, Marianas High School. If you would like to be a part of our first post-pandemic performance, come and audition. Contact Harold Easton at eastonaa@hotmail.com with any questions. (PR)

Scheduled power service interruption on July 10

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be a scheduled power service interruption on Saturday, July 10, 2021.

■ Outage Time: 5am to 11am (Estimated)

■ Areas Affected: Portions of Lower Base (Seaplane Ramp Pl.)

MOMENTARY OUTAGES:

Time: 5am to 6am and 10am to 11am

■ Areas affected: Portions of Puerto Rico (Marine Enforcement Facility (Marina), partial of the U.S. Army Reserve, Eloy trios Peace Park, Shell Marianas Terminal. Winners Gas, Mobil Oil Marianas Terminal, Division of Customs Service, Saipan

Shipping Company, Seaport, the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife, and Seaplane Ramp P1.)

■ Circuit: Feeder 2

■ Water Well Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S-3 Lift Station

■ Purpose: To perform systems maintenance on the Feeder 2 distribution circuit.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

CHamoru commission meeting set

The *Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru yan i Fina'nā'guen i Historia yan i Lina'la' i Tao-tao Tāno'* (Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam) will hold its second July monthly meeting on July 15, 2021, Thursday, from 12:30pm to 3:30pm in a virtual meeting. Contact Kumisión secretary Roland Blas for special accommodations, virtual link information, and agenda at 480-4047 or email at rlaskumision@gmail.com. (PR)

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
RFP21-CHCC-HIT-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 9, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"CHCC LABORATORY INTERFACE NETWORK EXPANSION"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
RFQ21-CHCC-ELC-002

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 9th, 2021 TIME: 4:30PM (CHST)

"PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR INDEFINITE DELIVERY INDEFINITE QUANTITY (IDIQ) INFORMATICS ANALYSIS"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

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Application forms can be picked up at Fishing Tackle in Susupe and at MVA Office in Oleai.

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXI, Issue No. 133Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
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EDITORIAL

Colleges should offer an alternative to a vaccine requirement

As colleges and universities prepare for a fall semester of in-person classes and the return of extracurricular activities and events, some still are weighing the option of requiring students and staff to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Already more than 500 institutions nationwide have made the decision that a vaccine will be required to return to campus.

Given what has transpired over the past 18 months, institutions of higher learning should want to do everything possible to limit any outbreaks of COVID-19 that could once again disrupt learning and student life. And while a vaccine requirement seems the most obvious way to move forward in a safe environment, it overlooks the fact that individuals have the right to refuse a vaccine. In this country, citizens have the right to be wrong.

There are options that should be explored.

Most schools that have adopted a vaccine requirement have added exceptions for those opposed for medical or religious reasons. An exception should likewise be available to those who do not want a vaccine—for whatever reason—but who still want to attend school.

Although vaccination is by far the best way to limit the spread of COVID-19, there can be sincere concerns about the vaccines that were authorized by the federal Food and Drug Administration through an emergency order. There is a workable way around the problem and one that has been in place since the start of the pandemic: testing.

Those who wish to attend classes but do not want the vaccine should be offered the option of undergoing regular testing—at their own expense—and agree to adhere to safety protocols the school has established. Those protocols could include wearing a mask and quarantining for a period if the student tests positive.

Most of the more than 4,000 degree-granting schools are taking the right approach in encouraging students to get vaccinated, even setting up clinics on campus and scheduling them through the summer. Many are smartly offering incentives for vaccination, ranging from cash and university swag to state-run lotteries such as in Ohio, where students can qualify to win a four-year scholarship.

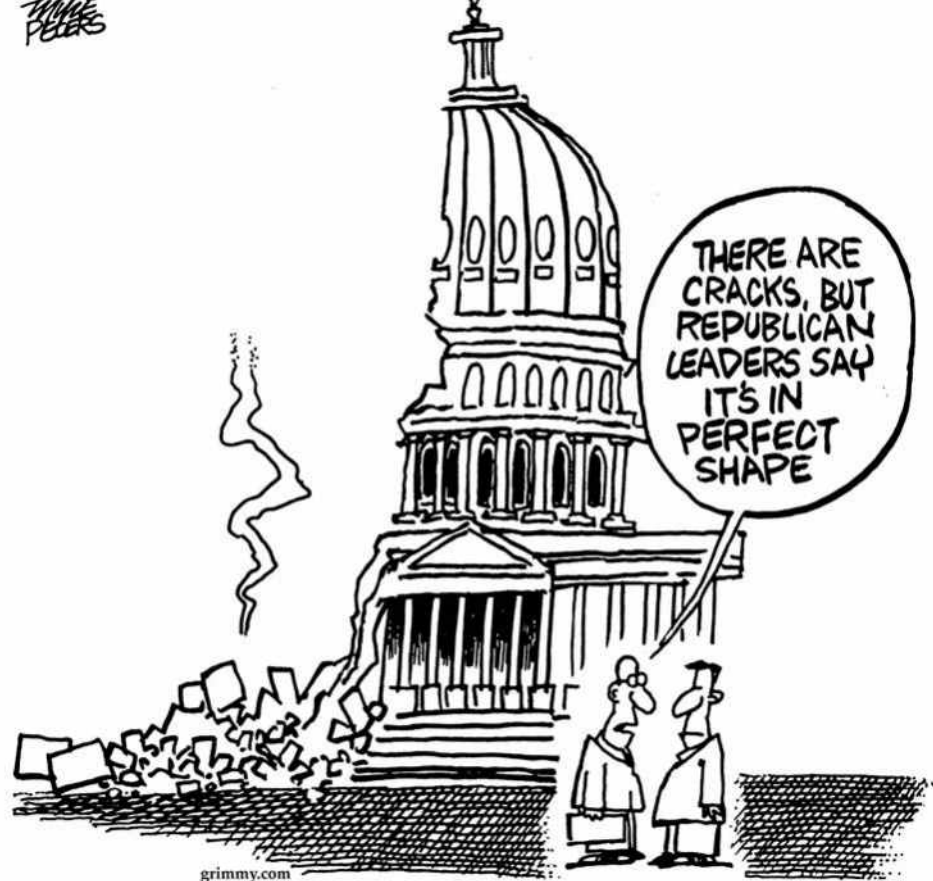
Educating students about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines and encouraging inoculation are the best ways to douse vaccine hesitancy. Schools that have announced a requirement have seen protests on campus and pushback from some state lawmakers. Hundreds of students staged a protest last month at Rutgers over the vaccine requirement, as did students, parents and staff at Indiana University during a board of trustees meeting.

Although schools may have the legal authority to impose a vaccine requirement, it would make more sense to acknowledge that there are some who are simply opposed. Schools should establish safety protocols built around ongoing and incentivized testing of students.

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THREE PILES

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Members of Gen Z say the government is letting them down

A national study that checked in with Generation Z one year into the COVID-19 pandemic suggests the U.S. government has work to do to gain their trust.

According to findings from “The New Normal,” a nationwide February 2021 study conducted by Springtide Research Institute, majorities of Gen Z disagree that the government has done its best to protect us (66 percent), that they’ve felt protected by the government during the pandemic (64 percent), and that the government has done a good job navigating the pandemic (65 percent). A strong majority (80 percent) disagree that they felt safe in public during the pandemic.

These findings have significant implications at a time when the government is ramping up efforts to reach a generation that accounts for a quarter of COVID cases yet has shown vaccine hesitancy, being called one of the “biggest barriers to mass immunity.” More than half of the study’s 2,500 participants (57 percent) agreed that it might be hard to trust others, including the government, because of how they handled the pandemic.

Most of the coverage on vaccine holdouts among Gen Z has focused on their lack of urgency due to their age. They are “invincible, young, and healthy,” as one psychologist put it. However, Springtide’s findings suggest that distrust toward the government may be the elephant in the room that isn’t being addressed.

As recently as April, it was discovered that little to no vaccine messaging from the White House was being tailored to Gen Z. One 22-year-old told STAT, “There isn’t anything that is consumable and/or targeted at our demographic. ... [Messaging online] isn’t targeted toward our age group, it doesn’t explain why, if you’re a healthy 19-year-old, you should get this vaccine.”

Other Gen Z’ers have shared concerns about the long-term health impact of the vaccines, citing the need for more information before making a decision. “Health and government officials must honestly address concerns and barriers raised by Gen-Z adults regarding vaccination,” medical students Matt Alexander and Jesper K, told CNN, naming concerns about infertility, blood-clotting, heart conditions, and the fear of missing work, school, or caretaking duties. “While it will be challenging to create effective campaigns that resonate authentically with Gen Z, it’s a necessary step to build trust among our generation,” they said.

Last week, the White House admitted that the United States would not reach its stated goal of 70 percent of adults receiving at least one COVID-19 shot by Independence Day, and the gap is primarily made up of young adults—which Biden’s COVID team acknowledges. Vaccine coverage among Gen Z has been

By KEVIN SINGER
The Fulcrum

Kevin Singer is head of media and public relations at the Springtide Research Institute, a nonprofit that researches the social, cultural and religious views of American teenagers and young adults.



lower and is increasing more slowly than in other age groups. If the current pace continues, only 57 percent of adults under 30 will have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of August.

Notably, the White House’s new strategy to close the gap is to leverage the trust that young people have toward their peers. The Biden administration’s grassroots approach includes the formation of a COVID-19 student community corps of leaders as young as 16 years old. The initiative aims to equip young people with tools to go into their communities and talk to their classmates, family members and friends about getting vaccinated.

The White House is also leveraging the popularity of social apps among Gen Z, partnering with Snapchat and YouTube to encourage vaccinations. Snapchat alone reaches 90 percent of people ages 13-24 in the United States as well as 75 percent of the 13- to 34-year-old U.S. population.

This multi-pronged, grassroots approach suggests the Biden administration is sensitive to the challenge of persuading a generation that is far less trusting of the government than previous generations. In a 2019 Pew study that tracked American’s trust in the government and other aspects of civic life, nearly half of young adults (46 percent) ended up in the “low trust group”—a significantly higher share than among older adults. Even more, data on epidemics since 1970 suggest that individuals who experience an epidemic during their “impressionable years” (ages 18-25) are less likely to have confidence in political institutions, leaders and elections.

For the Biden administration and Gen Z, the stakes of building trust couldn’t be higher. The highly infectious new Delta strain of COVID-19 is spreading rapidly among young people in the United Kingdom, prompting Biden to tweet, “If you’re young and haven’t gotten your shot yet, it really is time. It’s the best way to protect yourself and those you love.”

Hopefully, Biden’s plea isn’t too little, too late.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Why Phylicia Rashad's latest Bill Cosby defense is another example of women not believing women

PHILADELPHIA — Women didn't believe me, either. I'll skip the details to protect the innocent along with the guilty. But here's the abridged version: It was supposed to be one of the best times of my life, and it mostly was—except for the “touchy-feely” guy who just wouldn't let up.

I told the women around us, some who had even witnessed it. He made me “uncomfortable,” I said.

Good lord—“touchy-feely,” “uncomfortable”—we didn't even have the language back then to call it what it was.

He was nice, harmless, many of the women insisted. The implication: Why was I making a big deal out of a little attention?

At one point it got so bad that a woman in a position of power to do something was alerted, only for me to get a phone call. He and I were scheduled to be at the same event, but he'd chivalrously sent word that if I was “uncomfortable,” he'd skip it. I could hear the sympathy—for him—in her ask. I felt trapped—not believed—so I acquiesced. I'd deal.

I can taste the anger and disgust rising up in the back of my throat anytime I think about it.

So, I try not to think about it.

And then on Wednesday, Bill Cosby was released from prison after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned his sexual assault conviction—the first high-profile celebrity conviction of the #MeToo era where we finally seemed to have the language to talk about sexual abuse and sexual harassment and a reason to hope that things might get better. Believe women became a rallying call, with an asterisk.

Let's be very clear about what happened: Cosby is not inno-

cent. He was not exonerated. He was set free on a technicality—a previous prosecutor's promise not to criminally charge Cosby—despite 60 women courageously coming together to say yes, that beloved 83-year-old comedic legend once known as “America's Dad” had drugged and sexually assaulted them.

An appalling reminder of our flawed justice system—and yet, it was the defense from actress Phylicia Rashad who played Cosby's TV wife that brought back the stinging taste in my mouth.

“Finally!!!” Rashad tweeted. “A terrible wrong is being righted—a miscarriage of justice is corrected.”

Cosby had already served more than two years of a three-to-10-year sentence after he was found guilty of drugging and assaulting Temple University employee Andrea Constand in 2004.

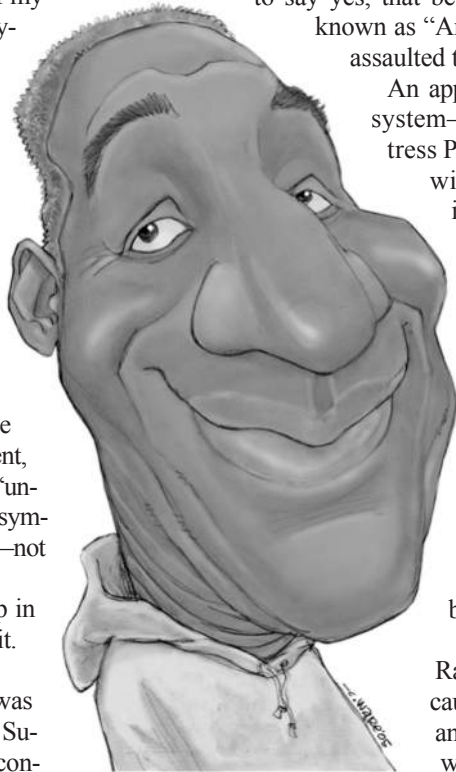
You know why Cosby's imprisonment was such a big deal? Because women don't report sexual misconduct over the very real fear that they won't be believed, especially by men.

You want to know why apologists like Rashad should be loudly called out? Because we may not talk about it as much, but another reason that women don't come forward is because of the women who don't believe women—no matter the proof.

Because it didn't happen to them. Because the men were too nice or harmless or old—or powerful. Because telling the truth comes at a cost, and not everyone is willing to pay the steep price.

Because, sisterhood! But only sometimes, and sorta.

Because even when we've been through it, and I include myself



By **HELEN UBIÑAS**
The Philadelphia Inquirer



here, we still don't always know how to do right by one another.

Because, because, because... the systems and institutions and industries built by men to protect men, especially the rich, famous and powerful ones, do not rise or survive without the implicit complicity of women.

Just look at white women's roles in systemic racism.

Or the silence, by women, around sexism or bro culture in the workplace, any workplace. As if by keeping quiet, women will suddenly become one of the guys. Welcome to the boys club.

And it only gets worse, and more disappointing, when these women are in positions of power themselves, only to choose to add to the chorus of disbelieving women.

I can hear the defense of Rashad's defense now: Disagree all you want, but Rashad is allowed to have her opinion! Sure—except she's not just some random woman siding with a sexual predator.

She's the new fine arts dean at Howard University, her alma mater.

Think about the message her defense of the indefensible sends to young women who might look to her as a role model, a potential powerful ally at a school where a lawsuit was filed by five female Howard students in 2017 that alleged the university had failed to “swiftly handle sexual assault reports.”

Think of all the women who fought for justice and all the women who watched them triumph, and, like Rashad, thought: Finally!!!—only to be betrayed again.

Why the US won't go to the mat for the subjugated people of Hong Kong

The last time I was in Hong Kong, I stood high on a hill above the vertical city looking down from the German ambassador's residence on an unruly, free-spirited metropolis in the midst of a popular uprising.

The democracy protests were at their height in those weeks near the end of 2019, and the city still felt giddily free and hopeful. Posters calling for the liberation of Hong Kong from Chinese rule, and for the victory of democracy over totalitarianism, were plastered on the walls. Photos of anti-riot police waving guns and shooting tear gas were being scraped from the underground tunnels by authorities. Whispers of where the next protest would take place floated through the city.

Perhaps I should've understood more clearly what lay ahead when I heard Hu XiJin, a Chinese journalist from a state-run newspaper, speak at the conference I was attending. He angrily defended the mainland's heavy-handed policies and aggressively cautioned the United States not to tell China what to do. The protesters are violent, he said, adding that if similar demonstrations had occurred in the West, the marchers would undoubtedly have been shot.

“We're not interfering with your country, why should you interfere with us?” he said. “Why should we obey your orders?”

And they haven't. Instead, exactly a year ago this week, on June 30, 2020, China imposed a draconian National Security Law on the city. Since then, independent newspapers have been closed down, protests quashed and more than 10,000 people arrested for crimes such as “uttering seditious words.”

As Human Rights Watch noted in a report issued last week, the Chinese government is now pressing residents to pledge public loyalty to the regime in Beijing. It is turning the police and courts into “tools of Chinese state control rather than independent and impartial enforcers of the rule of law.” Candidates considered insufficiently loyal to China have been barred from running for Hong Kong's electoral council. Academic freedom is under attack. Websites have been blocked, museums harassed, films canceled, political slogans banned, school curriculums rewritten. Books have been removed from libraries.

Watching a country move from freedom to subjugation is heartrending. And perhaps the most frustrating part is that the

United States and the international community seem unlikely to do much about it.

For one thing, the U.S. can't easily bully a fellow superpower like China, with its rising economy and substantial arsenal. And there are many critically important issues on which we and China must cooperate. The Biden administration has to take a risk versus benefits approach. Are we willing to risk cooperation on climate change to defend the freedom of Hong Kong? Will we stop trading with China to combat censorship and repression? Will we jeopardize the possibility of collaboration on Iranian nuclear proliferation?

It's true that China has abrogated its commitments to the one-time British colony. But American policy makers, who don't see Hong Kong as a fundamental or core national interest, will only go so far. The U.S. can express its grave concerns and its dismay. It can slap on sanctions, as it has, including on Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam, who has embraced Beijing's mandates. It can and should cooperate with other democratic countries to shame China, if that's possible, including at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

But in the end, few people believe the U.S. will go to the mat for the people of Hong Kong. And given China's record of imposing control in places like Tibet and Muslim-areas of China, things could get a lot rockier.

“We don't have the luxury of building a foreign policy that is centered on promoting the rule of democracy and human rights, so our influence is limited,” says Richard Haass, the former director of policy planning for the U.S. State Department who is now president of the Council on Foreign Relations. “We can vent, but we should have no illusions that it'll change the situation on the ground in Hong Kong. That may seem cruel, but it's a fact of life.”

Samuel Chu, managing director of the Hong Kong Democracy Council in Washington, D.C., is more optimistic. Chu, who has a warrant out for his arrest under the National Security Law, says he sees vulnerability on the part of China and a global shift of sentiment since the Hong Kong crackdown. He says there's a lot to be done: helping fight censorship and circumvent the

By **NICHOLAS GOLDBERG**
Los Angeles Times

Nicholas Goldberg is an associate editor and op-ed columnist for the Los Angeles Times.



coming internet firewall, helping activists get out of the country when China comes after them, working to strengthen the civil society groups and pressuring businesses in Hong Kong not to go along with the repression.

Hong Kong's problems began when the British handed the territory back to China in 1997 after a century and a half of colonial rule. Under their agreement, Hong Kong was to be granted a 50-year interim period during which it would retain its capitalist economy and its democratic freedoms under a policy known as “one country, two systems.” In 2047, the city was to fall under full Chinese control.






But China hasn't waited; it has been chipping away at Hong Kong's freedom since the handover.

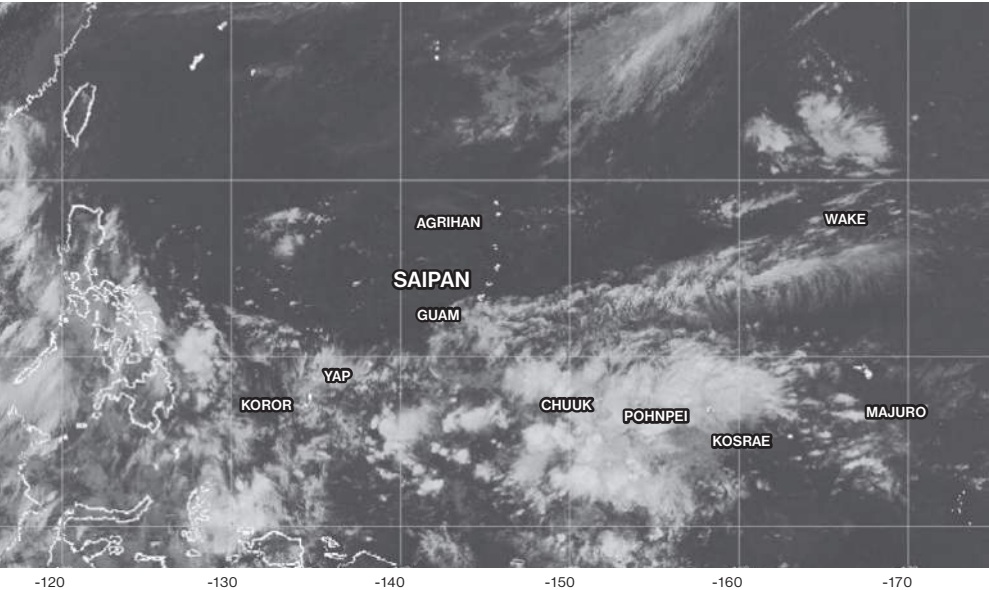
In 2015, I met with the young Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong in my office when he was only 18 years old and already a hero at home. Brave and upbeat, he told me how he fit his democracy activism into a schedule that also required him to do his homework.

Now Wong is in prison again, this time sentenced to 10 months for lighting candles and sitting in the park peacefully to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989.

The chance of a reversion to the status quo seems slim. But I can't help hoping for a turnabout, for Joshua Wong's sake, for the sake of the residents of Hong Kong and for the sake of democracy around the world.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph, decreasing to less than 10 mph after sunset.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	
88°	78°	88°	78°	88°	78°	88°	78°	88°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:21 AM, TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A quiet pattern of partly cloudy skies, isolated showers and moderate trades is in place across the Marianas. Seas remain around 5 feet at the Ipan buoy.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20

seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK

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MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 76°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:52 AM	6:51 PM
Thursday	5:52 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:52 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:53 AM	6:51 PM
Sunday	5:53 AM	6:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	3:17 AM	4:33 PM	-
Thursday	4:02 AM	5:25 PM	-
Friday	4:51 AM	6:17 PM	-
Saturday	5:43 AM	7:09 PM	-
Sunday	6:37 AM	7:59 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Windy	55° / 46°	
Beijing	Thunderstorms	99° / 79°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	88° / 81°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86° / 76°	
London	Partly Cloudy	72° / 55°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	84° / 66°	
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	55° / 46°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	87° / 80°	
New York	Thunderstorms	88° / 75°	
Osaka	Thunderstorms	88° / 77°	
Paris	Showers	72° / 55°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	86° / 75°	
Rome	Sunny	93° / 72°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	92° / 74°	
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	63° / 54°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	90° / 73°	
Tokyo	Showers	84° / 75°	
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	96° / 79°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:44 AM	High Tide	1.90	
12:19 PM	Low Tide	0.13	
7:40 PM	High Tide	1.85	
-	-	-	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 1, 2021									
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS					
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN					
UA117	6:30am	7:10am	1, 3, 5, 6, 7		UA174	4:50am	5:31am	1, 3, 5, 6, 7	
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN					
UA117/183	6:30am	8:50pm	5 via Guam		UA184/174	9:50pm	5:31am+1	5 via Guam	
UA117/183	6:30am	9:10pm	3, 7 via Guam						
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM					
UA183	6:55pm	8:50pm	5		UA184	9:50pm	4:05am+1	5	
UA183	7:15pm	9:10pm	1, 3		UA184	10:25pm	4:20am+1	1, 3	
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. <i>(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)</i>									
STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.									
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021									
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1202	8:00	8:15	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1203	9:00	9:15	Daily		
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	1204	10:00	10:15	Daily		
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	1205	11:00	11:15	Daily		
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri	1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable		
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily	1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable		
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	14:00	14:15	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	15:00	15:15	Daily		
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily	1210	16:00	16:15	Daily		
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily	1211	17:00	17:15	Daily		
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri	1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable		
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily	TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
ROTA TO GUAM				FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable		
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily		
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	9:30	9:45	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily		
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable	2105	11:30	11:45	Daily		
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable		
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily		
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily		
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily		
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily		
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable		

Business

Amazon begins new chapter as Bezos hands over CEO role

NEW YORK (AP)—Amazon founder Jeff Bezos stepped down as CEO on Monday, handing over the reins as the company navigates the challenges of a world fighting to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic.

Andy Jassy, who ran Amazon's cloud-computing business, replaced Bezos, a change the company announced in February.

Bezos, Amazon's biggest shareholder with a stake worth about \$180 billion, will still hold sway over the company

he started out of his Seattle garage in 1995. He takes over the role of executive chair, with plans to focus on new products and initiatives.

Jassy takes the helm of a \$1.7 trillion company that benefited greatly from the pandemic, more than tripling its profits in the first quarter of 2021 and posting record revenue as customers grew ever more dependent on online shopping.

At the same time, Amazon faces activism from a restive workforce just as a rapid economic recovery causes a labor

crunch that has retailers, manufacturers and other companies competing for workers with higher wages and other benefits. The company defeated an attempt by workers to unionize at an Alabama warehouse earlier this year, but faces a more formidable challenge as the International Brotherhood of Teamsters launches a broader effort to unionize Amazon workers.

In a blog post to employ-



Bezos

ees earlier this year, Bezos said he planned to devote more time to side projects, including his space exploration company Blue Origin, his philanthropic initiatives and overseeing The Washington Post, which he owns.

First up, the richest man in the world by Forbes' estimate will fulfill his childhood dream of traveling to space. Bezos, 57, will blast into space on July 20 when Blue Origin makes it

first flight with a crew, bringing along his younger brother Mark, an investor and volunteer firefighter.

Bezos founded Amazon as an online bookstore and built it into a shopping and entertainment empire that is the second-largest private employer in the U.S., behind Walmart. Amazon, which is buying the MGM movie studio in its latest major acquisition, now makes movies and sofas, owns a grocery chain and has plans to send satellites into space to beam internet service to Earth.

Jassy, who has been with Amazon since 1997, ran the cloud-computing business that powers video-streaming site Netflix and many other companies, making it one of Amazon's most profitable businesses.

Among Jassy's challenges are growing calls for tighter regulation on tech giants. A report by the House Judiciary Committee in October called for possibly breaking up Amazon and others, making it harder for them to acquire companies and imposing new rules to safeguard competition.

Fallout continues from biggest global ransomware attack

BOSTON (AP)—The single biggest ransomware attack yet continued to bite Monday as more details emerged on how a Russia-linked gang breached the exploited software company. The criminals essentially used a tool that helps protect against malware to spread it globally.

Thousands of organizations—largely firms that remotely manage the IT infrastructure of others—were infected in at least 17 countries in Friday's assault. Kaseya, whose product was exploited, said Monday that they include several just returning to work.

Because the attack by the notorious REvil gang came just as a long Fourth of July weekend began, many more victims were expected to learn their fate when they return to the office Tuesday.

REvil is best known for extorting \$11 million from the meat processor JBS last month. Security researchers said its ability to evade anti-

malware safeguards in this attack and its apparent exploitation of a previous unknown vulnerability on Kaseya servers reflect the growing financial muscle of REvil and a few dozen other top ransomware gangs whose success helps them afford the best digital burglary wares. Such criminals infiltrate networks and paralyze them by scrambling data, extorting their victims.

REvil was seeking \$5 million payouts from the so-called managed service providers that were its principal downstream targets in this attack, apparently demanding much less—just \$45,000—from their afflicted customers.

But late Sunday, it offered on its dark web site to make available a universal decryptor

that would unscramble all affected machines if it's paid \$70 million in cryptocurrency. Some researchers considered the offer a PR stunt, while others thought it indicates the criminals have more victims than they can manage.

Sweden may be hardest hit—or at least most transparent about the damage. Its defense minister, Peter Hultqvist, bemoaned in a TV interview “how fragile the system is when it comes to IT security.” Most of the Swedish grocery chain Coop's 800 stores were closed for a third day, their cash registers crippled. A Swedish pharmacy chain, gas station chain, the state railway and public broadcaster SVT also were hit.

A wide array of businesses

and public agencies were affected, including in financial services and travel, but few large companies were hit, the cybersecurity firm Sophos said. The United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Indonesia, New Zealand and Kenya were among countries affected, researchers said.

In a statement Sunday, deputy U.S. national security adviser Anne Neuberger urged all victims to alert the FBI. A day earlier, the FBI said in an alert that the attack's scale “may make it so that we are unable to respond to each victim individually.”

The vast majority of ransomware victims are loathe to publicly admit it, and many avoid reporting attacks to law

enforcement or disclosing if they pay ransoms unless required by law.

President Joe Biden said Saturday that he ordered a “deep dive” by U.S. intelligence into the attack and that the U.S. would respond if it determines the Kremlin is involved. In Geneva last month, Biden sought to pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin to end safe haven for REvil and other ransomware gangs that operate with impunity in Russia and allied states as long as they avoid domestic targets. The syndicates' extortionary attacks have worsened in the past year.

On Monday, Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was asked if Russia was aware of the attack or had looked into it. He said no but suggested

it could be discussed during U.S.-Russian consultations on cybersecurity issues. No date has been set for such consultations, and few analysts expect the Kremlin to crack down on a crime wave that benefits Putin's strategic objectives of destabilizing the West.

Kaseya said Monday that fewer than 70 of its 37,000 customers were affected, though most were managed service providers with multiple downstream customers. Most managed service providers were apt to know by Monday if they were hit but that may not be true for many of the small and medium-sized organizations they serve, said Ross McKerchar, chief information security officer at Sophos. The MSPs are flying blind because the very software tool they use to monitor customer networks was knocked out by the attack.

Supercar maker Bugatti taken over by Croatian company Rimac

ZAGREB, Croatia (AP)—Croatia's electric supercar maker, which started in a garage a decade ago, is taking over the iconic French manufacturer Bugatti in a deal that is reported to be worth millions of euros.

The Croatian car producer Rimac Automobili said Germany's Volkswagen Group, including the Porsche division—which owns a majority stake in Bugatti—plans to create a new joint venture. The new company will be called Bugatti-Rimac.

Rimac Automobili announced Monday that it will be combining forces with Bugatti to “create a new automotive and technological powerhouse.”

Rimac has progressed in 10 years from a one-man garage startup to a successful company that produces electric supercars. Mate Rimac, who founded the company in 2009, says the venture is an “exciting moment” and calls the combination of the com-

AP
This handout photo provided by Rimac Automobili shows a Rimac Nevera electric car, at an undisclosed location in Croatia, April 15, 2021.



panies “a perfect match for each other.”

Porsche will own 45% of Bugatti-Rimac while Rimac Automobili will hold the remaining 55% stake, according to Croatian media reports. Fi-

nancial details of the deal were not published.

Bugattis will continue to be assembled in eastern France, where the company was established in 1909. The vehicles will use engines developed

and made in Croatia.

“In an industry evolving at ever-increasing speed, flexibility, innovation and sustainability remain at the very core of Rimac's operations,” the company said. “Uniting

Rimac's technical expertise and lean operations with Bugatti's 110-year heritage of design and engineering prowess represents a fusion of leading automotive minds.”

BankPacific celebrates 67 years of service

It was 67 years ago on this day when BankPacific, then known as Guam Savings and Loan Association, opened its doors to the public in the Guam Daily News Building, where the DNA Building stands today in Hagatna.

Their first depositor was then-governor Ford Elvidge and it was received by future governor and bank founder Joseph Flores. The bank's first loan was to the late Joe and Flo Gutierrez for their home in Agana Heights.

In celebration BankPacific is inviting all, customers and non-customers alike, to visit its offices today for refreshments and a good time. **(PR)**

Nation

Demolition widens search at condo site, but storms threaten

SURFSIDE, Fla. (AP)—Rescuers searched through fresh rubble Monday after the last of the collapsed Florida condo building was demolished, which allowed crews into previously inaccessible places, including bedrooms where people were believed to be sleeping at the time of the disaster, officials said.

But they faced a new challenge from thunderstorms that hit the area as Tropical Storm Elsa approached the state.

Four more victims were discovered in the new pile, Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah told family members, raising the death toll to 28 people. Another 117 people remain unaccounted for.

The demolition late Sunday was crucial to the search-and-rescue effort, officials said, and raised the prospect that crews could increase both the pace of their work and the number of searchers at the site, although the chance of finding survivors 12 days after the June 24 collapse has diminished.

“We know that with every day that goes by, it is harder to see a miracle happening,” said Maggie Castro, a firefighter and paramedic with the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department who briefs families daily.

Teams had been unable to access areas closest to the remaining structure because of its instability, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella



AP
Rescue crews work at the site of the collapsed Champlain Towers South condo building after the remaining structure was demolished Sunday, in Surfside, Fla., Monday, July 5, 2021.

Levine Cava said.

“Truly we could not continue without bringing this building down,” she said at a news conference.

Part of the existing debris

pile was also helping to support the remaining structure, City of Miami Fire Rescue Capt. Ignatius Carroll said. Rescuers were still holding out hope of reuniting loved ones.

“We continue to remain focused on our primary mission, and that is to leave no stone unturned and to find as many people as we can and to help bring either some answers to

family and loved ones or to bring some closure to them,” Carroll said.

The newly accessible area includes master bedrooms where people were believed to be sleeping when the building collapsed, Florida Gov. Ron

DeSantis said.

“We will be able to access every part of that pile, which they hadn’t been able to do up to this point,” DeSantis said. “I think it’s going to move the pace. I think the momentum is very strong.”

US left Afghan airfield at night, didn’t tell new commander

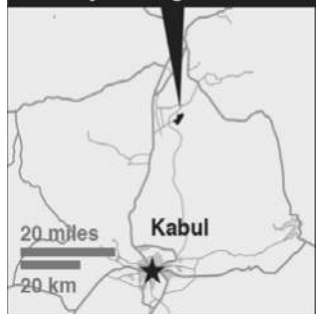
BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP)—The U.S. left Afghanistan’s Bagram Airfield after nearly 20 years by shutting off the electricity and slipping away in the night without notifying the base’s new Afghan commander, who discovered the Americans’ departure more than two hours after they left, Afghan military officials said.

Afghanistan’s army showed off the sprawling air base Monday, providing a rare first glimpse of what had been the epicenter of America’s war to unseat the Taliban and hunt down the al-Qaida perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks on America.

The U.S. announced Friday it had completely vacated its biggest airfield in the country in advance of a final withdrawal the Pentagon says will be completed by the end of August.

“We (heard) some rumor that the Americans had left Bagram...and finally by seven o’clock in the morning, we understood that it was confirmed that they had already left Bagram,” Gen. Mir Asa-

After nearly 20 years, the U.S. military left Bagram Airfield



Source: AP
Graphic: Staff, TNS

dullah Kohistani, Bagram’s new commander said.

U.S. military spokesman Col. Sonny Leggett did not address the specific complaints of many Afghan soldiers who inherited the abandoned airfield, instead referring to a state-

ment last week.

The statement said the handover had been in the process soon after President Joe Biden’s mid-April announcement that America was withdrawing the last of its forces. Leggett said in the statement that they had coordinated their departures with Afghanistan’s leaders.

Before the Afghan army could take control of the airfield about an hour’s drive from the Afghan capital Kabul, it was invaded by a small army of looters, who ransacked barrack after barrack and rummaged through giant storage tents before being evicted, according to Afghan military officials.

“At first we thought maybe they were Taliban,” said Abdul Raouf, a soldier of 10 years. He said the the U.S. called from the Kabul airport and said “we are here at the airport in Kabul.”

Kohistani insisted the Afghan National Security and Defense Force could hold on to the heavily fortified base despite a string of Taliban wins on the battlefield.

The airfield also includes a prison with about 5,000 prisoners, many of them allegedly Taliban.

The Taliban’s latest surge comes as the last U.S. and NATO forces pull out of the country. As of last week, most NATO soldiers had already quietly left. The last U.S. soldiers are likely to remain until an agreement to protect the Kabul Hamid Karzai International Airport, which is expected to be done by Turkey, is completed.

Meanwhile, in northern Afghanistan, district after district has fallen to the Taliban. In just the last two days hundreds of Afghan soldiers fled across the border into Tajikistan rather than fight the insurgents.

“In battle it is sometimes one step forward and some steps back,” said Kohistani.

Kohistani said the Afghan military is changing its strategy to focus on the strategic districts. He insisted they would retake them in the coming days without saying how that would be accomplished.

ACROSS THE NATION

3 killed in northern Wisconsin house fire; 3 escape blaze

ASHLAND, Wis. (AP)—Authorities say three people were killed in a house fire Monday morning in the northern Wisconsin town of Ashland. The Ashland Police Department said firefighters and police responded shortly after 9:30 a.m., when they discovered that three people had escaped the burning house. Three bodies were later found inside. One of the three people who got out of the house was taken to a hospital to be treated for burns. No further information was immediately available. The Ashland Fire Department, Ashland Police Department and Wisconsin Fire Marshal are investigating the cause of the blaze. Ashland, a town of about 8,000 people, is located 70 miles (115 kilometers) east of Duluth, Minnesota.

2 Chicago officers shot, wounded trying to break up crowd

Two Chicago police officers were shot and wounded early Monday while trying to break up a crowd following Fourth of July gatherings, authorities said. The shooting about 1:45 a.m. on the city’s West Side happened less than an hour after a drive-by shooting in Washington Park on the city’s South Side left two people dead and four others wounded. Between Friday night and early Monday morning, 12 people had been fatally shot in Chicago and at least 40 more suffered gunshot wounds, according to department statistics. Monday is considered part of the long holiday weekend, so final statistics won’t be available until Tuesday. At the same time, with the shooting that wounded the officers, the department so far this year has seen 33 of its officers either shot at or shot compared with 22 during the same period last year. (AP)

Asia



Rescuers continue a search operation at the site of a mudslide at Izusan in Atami, Shizuoka prefecture, southwest of Tokyo Tuesday, July 6, 2021.

24 still missing in Japan mudslide; at least 4 dead

ATAMI, Japan (AP)—Rescue workers dug through sludge and debris Monday looking for more than 20 people who may be trapped after a torrent of mud, trees and rocks ripped with a roar through a Japanese seaside resort town, killing at least four people.

Atami Mayor Sakae Saito said 24 people were still unreachable Tuesday morning, after the city late Monday released the names of more than 60 registered residents who were unaccounted for and the

majority of them responded for the contact request. Officials were double checking the number because many of the apartments and houses in Atami are second homes or vacation rentals.

Initially, 147 people were unreachable, but officials confirmed many safely evacuated or were simply not at home. In addition to the four people found dead, officials said 25 people have been rescued, including three who were injured.

The disaster is an added trial as authorities prepare for the Tokyo Olympics, due to start in less than three weeks, while Japan is still in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, with cases steadily climbing in the capital and experts suggesting a need for another state of emergency.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told reporters that rescue workers are doing their utmost “to rescue those who may be buried under the mud and waiting for help as soon as possible.” Three coast guard ships, and six military drones were backing up hundreds of troops, firefighters and others toiling in the rain and fog.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Taliban wins close consulates; Tajikistan reinforces border

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—A surge of Taliban wins in northern Afghanistan has caused some countries to close their north Afghan consulates, while across the border in Tajikistan reservists are being called up to reinforce its southern border, according to officials and reports on Tuesday. Nearly 1,000 Afghan soldiers have fled the Taliban advances by crossing the border into Tajikistan, according to reports from Tajikistan. A statement on Monday from the Tajik government said President Emomali Rakhmon has ordered the mobilization of 20,000 military reservists to strengthen its border with Afghanistan. The Afghan military exodus comes as Taliban overrun most districts in northeastern Badakhshan province. Many of the districts collapsed without a fight but along the province’s northern border with Tajikistan, hundreds of Afghan National Security and Defense Forces crossed the border seeking safety.

9 arrested over alleged plot to plant bombs around Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong Kong police on Tuesday said they arrested nine people on suspicion of engaging in terrorist activity, after uncovering an attempt to make explosives and plant bombs across the city. The arrests come amid a political divisive time in Hong Kong, two years after months of massive anti-government protests rocked the city. Last week, a Hong Kong man stabbed a police officer with a knife, before killing himself. Of the nine ar-

rested, six are secondary school students. The group were attempting to make the explosive triacetone triperoxide (TATP) in a homemade laboratory in a hostel, police said. They planned to use the TATP to bomb courts, cross-harbor tunnels, railways and even planned to put some of these explosives in trash bins on the street “to maximize damage caused to the society,” police said. The nine arrested are five men and four women between 15 and 39 years old, according to Senior Superintendent Li Kwai-wah of the Hong Kong Police National Security Department.

As Tokyo Olympics approach, virus worries rise in Japan

TOKYO (AP)—The pressure of hosting an Olympics during a still-active pandemic is beginning to show in Japan. The games begin July 23, with organizers determined they will go on, even with a reduced number of spectators or possibly none at all. While Japan has made remarkable progress to vaccinate its population against COVID-19, the drive is losing steam because of supply shortages. With tens of thousands of visitors coming to a country that is only 13.8% fully vaccinated, gaps in border controls have emerged, highlighted by the discovery of infections among the newly arrived team from Uganda, with positive tests for the highly contagious delta variant. As cases grow in Tokyo, so have fears that the games will spread the virus. “We must stay on high alert,” Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told reporters on July 1. Noting the rising caseloads, he said “having no spectators is a possibility.”

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Press watchdog puts Hungarian PM Orban on ‘predators’ list

PARIS (AP)—Press watchdog Reporters Without Borders has put Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on its list of “predators,” the first time a Western European leader has been placed in the lineup of heads of state or government who “crack down massively” on press freedom. The list published Monday includes 37 leaders. Two women, the prime minister of Bangladesh and the Hong Kong’s administrative chief, also were added to the list, as well as Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. This was the first time in five years that the watchdog, known by its French initials RSF, has published its press freedom predator’s list. The report said Orban “has steadily and effectively undermined media pluralism and independence since being returned to power in 2010” by using “varied predatory techniques.” “The methods may be subtle or brazen, but they are always efficient,” the report said, citing control over 80% of the media via purchases by oligarchs close to Hungary’s ruling Fidesz party. Private media in Hungary are discriminated against in access to information and government advertising and denigrated as purveyors of “fake news,” the report said.

Spain: Police probe suspected hate crime targeting gay man

MADRID (AP)—Authorities in northwestern Spain are asking for time to fully investigate the death of a 24-year-old man that sparked widespread condemnation after friends of the victim claimed he was targeted and beaten to death for being gay. LGBTQ activists have called for protests in dozens of cities across Spain later on Monday and members of Spain’s left-wing Cabinet have condemned the death of Samuel Luiz in the early hours of Saturday as a hate crime. Police are reviewing surveillance cameras and questioning over a dozen suspects and witnesses who were outside a nightclub in the city of A Coruña at the time the crime took place, the government’s delegate in the northwestern Galicia region said Monday. Luiz’s friends told Spain’s El Mundo newspaper that the suspects began attacking Luiz, who was on a video call with a friend at the time, because they believed he was trying to record them. The attackers used a derogatory word for homosexuals, according to the friends’ version of the events.

Mexico says gang killed Indigenous leader over protest tolls

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Prosecutors in the northern Mexico border state of Sonora said Monday that a criminal gang killed a Yaqui rights leader because they wanted money his Indigenous group had raised at highway blockades. Tomás Rojo Valencia disappeared May 27 amid tensions over months of periodic blockades that the Yaqui put up to protest gas ducts, water pipelines and railway lines that have been run across their territory without consulting them or giving them much benefit. Sonora state prosecutor Claudia Contreras said Rojo Valencia had been trying to install a toll booth on a main highway that runs through Yaqui territory to raise money for his Indigenous community. It was apparently the money that was behind the killing of Rojo Valencia.

Mastermind in 2016 killing of Honduran activist convicted

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP)—A Honduran man was convicted of homicide

Monday in the 2016 killing of Berta Cáceres, a prize-winning environmental and Indigenous rights defender. After a three-month trial, the court unanimously found Roberto David Castillo Mejía guilty of participating in the killing of Cáceres, a member of the Lenca Indigenous group who led opposition to a dam project in which Castillo Mejía was involved. The court will convene on Aug. 2 to determine a sentence, which could be between 24 and 30 years. Castillo Mejía, who prosecutors say masterminded the killing, will remain jailed at an army base until sentencing. In December 2019, seven men were sentenced to prison for Cáceres’ murder. Four men were sentenced to 34 years for the murder and 16 years for attempted murder. Three others received sentences of 30 years for their roles. At the time, prosecutors said the killers acted on behalf of a company, Desa, that was building a dam being opposed by the activist. Castillo Mejía, who heads the project, was arrested in 2018.

Israel looks to renew law that keeps out Palestinian spouses

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel’s parliament was set to vote Monday on whether to renew a temporary law first enacted in 2003 that bars Arab citizens of Israel from extending citizenship or even residency to spouses from the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Critics, including many left-wing and Arab lawmakers, say it’s a racist measure aimed at restricting the growth of Israel’s Arab minority, while supporters say it’s needed for security purposes and to preserve Israel’s Jewish character. The law creates an array of difficulties for Palestinian families that span the war-drawn and largely invisible frontiers separating Israel from east Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, territories it seized in the 1967 war that the Palestinians want for a future state. “You want your security, it’s no problem, you can check each case by itself,” said Taiseer Khatib. His wife of more than 15 years, from the West Bank city of Jenin, must regularly apply for permits to live with him and their three children in Israel. “There’s no need for this collective punishment just because you are Palestinian,” he said.

‘Venezuela security forces continue killings, torture’

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Venezuelan security forces carried out fewer extra-judicial killings in the 12 months through April, a U.N. report said Monday, but it accuses them of a continued pattern of torture or cruel treatment of individuals as well as enforced disappearances and incommunicado detentions. The report from U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights calls on the government of President Nicolas Maduro to cease the use of excessive force during demonstrations, dismantle pro-government armed civilian groups and ensure effective and independent investigations of all killings by security forces. “Accountability remains key to preventing and remedying human rights violations and strengthening the rule of law,” said the report, which covers June 1, 2020, through April 30. “The protection and expansion of civic space is vital to strengthening democracy, fostering inclusive dialogue and addressing the root causes of current challenges.” Maduro’s government issued a statement rejecting what it called the “fallacious content” in the report. It accused the U.N. agency of basing the report “on a handful of alleged allegations of human rights violations” with the intent of destabilizing Venezuela.

Good Housekeeping

Five design trends for wood floors



The popularity of exotic woods has contributed to global deforestation. An alternative is to have floors made of wood reclaimed from old buildings or other sources.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By MARION J. LOUGHEED
ANGIE'S LIST

Wood flooring is a classic look for any home, but there are trends to consider when installing a new floor or refinishing an existing one:

1 WIDE FLOOR BOARDS

If you have smaller rooms, consider the trend toward wider planks, which create the illusion of more space. While wide boards can work in any room, the look is espe-

cially nice for cozier rooms.

2 EARTH-FRIENDLY WOOD

Sustainable products continue to be popular, including bamboo and cork. Bear in mind that these flooring materials aren't as tough as hardwood, and will need different maintenance and care. They may however, give your rooms a fresh, natural appeal.

For more information about bamboo and other flooring options, see the Angie's List Guide to Wood

Floor Alternatives.

The popularity of exotic woods has contributed to global deforestation. An alternative is to have floors made of wood reclaimed from old buildings or other sources. In the case of oak and some other hardwoods, reclaimed wood may make a better floor, since wood in older buildings often came from heartwood.

3 COLOR CHOICE

Darker tones, such as deep cherry and mahogany,

remain popular, and help create a sense of opulence and grandeur associated with classic comfort. Lighter colors contribute to a more casual, natural look. Ask your flooring professional to show you the latest options in wood floor color.

4 HANDSCRAPED HARDWOOD

At one time, wood floorboards routinely bore the marks of having been scraped by tools to create as smooth

a finish as possible. Today, handscraped and distressed floors are becoming popular, and there are a variety of ways to achieve the look, which can add cost.

5 PREFINISHED FLOORING

Some wood flooring now comes prefinished with a clear finish of tiny metal crystals that create a solid, protective layer. Such prefinishing allows floors to be quickly ready for foot traffic after installation.

For more information about wood floors, see the Angie's

List Guide to Hardwood Flooring. And when considering a new floor or having an existing one refinished, check Angie's List for local consumer reviews on wood flooring professionals, who are among more than 550 service providers on the List.

Marion J. Lougheed is a reporter at Angie's List, a trusted provider of local consumer reviews and an online marketplace of services from top-rated providers.

Start planning before building a patio

By TOM LANGE
ANGIE'S LIST

Before paying the deposit to build a new patio, take a moment and step outside.

Look at the paths leading to the backyard. Any trees or bushes blocking access might require trimming or removal to make room for equipment needed for the job.

Also, which way is the wind blowing? That's important to know if you plan to add a barbecue grill, outdoor kitchen or fire pit. Guests won't enjoy spending an evening with smoke in their faces.

The key to building a patio that holds up for years involves creating a detailed plan before breaking ground. A qualified contractor can design that plan, and answer questions you might not think to ask, such as why wind direction matters.

"I've never had one person think (about) which way the wind blows," says Robert Harmon, president of Elite Home Remodeling in Columbus, Ohio.

FINDING AND WORKING WITH A PATIO CONTRACTOR

The right patio contractor should listen to your needs, and create a plan or suggest alternatives. They can also anticipate potential problems before construction begins.

For example, building a patio facing south or west means the sun will bear down in the afternoon, which could cause problems if you plan to regularly cook out in the evening.

A skilled patio contractor can suggest a new spot for the patio, or explain how a pergola or awning provides shade, Harmon says.

"The contractor should be providing different options," Harmon says.

Also, talk with prospective contractors about how the patio could be used in the future.

If you hope to eventually build an outdoor kitchen or connect a grill to natural gas, consider adding a natural gas

line as part of the project. Otherwise, you might have to break apart and rebuild the patio in the future.

Be cautious of contractors who try to talk you into a vastly different project without providing an explanation, or quote a price without providing specifics about the job.

Vet potential contractors by looking at their previous work. Then, ask about the cost, time and types of labor involved.

HARDSCAPING OFTEN LEADS TO LANDSCAPING

Before construction begins, take your lawn and landscaping into consideration.

Contractors likely won't be driving concrete trucks into your backyard, but they will use heavy equipment to help with digging and gravel placement. This equipment can range between six and eight feet wide and weigh 5,000 and 10,000 pounds, says Will Mattingly, head of operations for Mattingly Concrete Inc. in Indianapolis.

Making enough room for that equipment often means clearing trees, bushes and other items from the path to the backyard. Laying plywood strips can limit damage to the lawn, though grass seed, straw or topsoil might also be needed to repair damaged sections of grass, Mattingly and Harmon say.

"Typically, with almost any patio project, a small- to medium-size landscaping project should be anticipated when the project is complete," Mattingly says.

INFORM YOUR NEIGHBORS

Lastly, tell your neighbors about the project.

Building a patio can be as invasive as installing a pool. It's best to address concerns your neighbors have about how the project could affect their properties.

"You really want to keep your neighbors happy while you're doing these projects," Mattingly says.



Bright wall stickers serve as a nonpermanent way to add color to this children's space.

SGM PHOTOGRAPHY/TNS

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Looking for ways to bring a wow factor to boring walls? While traditional canvases may be your go-to, there are certainly a number of wall art alternatives.

Dressing your walls is a great way to add an interesting design

element that often serves as a focal point or springboard to an interesting and more out-of-the-box space.

Need some wall design ideas? Here are some top tips.

1 Consider wallpaper. Wallpaper remains a popular and relatively affordable way to bring an instant design ele-

ment to boring walls.

2 Purchase removable wall stickers. Don't want something permanent? Wall stickers are both portable and temporary and can be used in a host of different spaces.

3 Infuse unexpected wall art such as tapestries, wall hangings or mixed media.

4 Go retro! A lot of times, classic rock-and-roll art or vintage framed prints add a design element that never goes out of style.

5 Frame oversized black and white prints. Big and bold works well when looking for ways to add a focal point or help ground a space.

Life & Style

R. Kelly's lawyer wants trial delayed due to jail quarantine

NEW YORK (AP)—R. Kelly's new lawyers are asking a judge to postpone his Aug. 9 sex trafficking trial in New York City, arguing they haven't had enough time to prepare be-

cause he's under a mandatory jail quarantine since his transfer from Chicago.

In a letter Monday to U.S. District Judge Ann Donnelly, lawyer Deveraux Cannick

wrote that Kelly's 14-day quarantine ending Tuesday has exacerbated what Cannick said was a "herculean effort" to get up to speed after their June 21 hiring.

Cannick argued in the letter that Kelly's new lawyers haven't been able to meet with him in person because of the quarantine and that proceeding with the R&B star's

trial as scheduled would rob him of effective and meaningful representation.

Kelly, whose legal name is Robert Sylvester Kelly, was placed in quarantine when he arrived at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn on June 22 from Chicago, where he was being held on similar charges. Tuesday will mark 14 days since Kelly's transfer to Brooklyn.

"Robert is anxious to have his day in court; however not at the expense of his Sixth Amendment rights," Cannick wrote, saying the request was not a delay tactic.

Federal prosecutors hadn't responded to Cannick's request as of Monday night and declined to comment. Donnelly has yet to rule on the filing.

Federal lockups have been quarantining transferred and newly incarcerated inmates since early in the COVID-19

pandemic as part of protocols to prevent the disease's spread.

Kelly, 54, is accused of leading an enterprise made up of his managers, bodyguards and other employees who helped him recruit women and girls for sex. Federal prosecutors say the group selected victims at concerts and other venues and arranged for them to travel to see Kelly. The Grammy Award-winning singer denies ever abusing anyone.

Cannick said that once Kelly's quarantine ends and he is cleared to meet with his lawyers, they'll be forced to jockey for one of a limited number of conference rooms at the Brooklyn jail. If a room is not available, he wrote, they'll have to meet with Kelly at a table alongside other lawyers and inmates.

"The nature of the evidence here does not lend itself to open frank discussions in such an environment," Cannick wrote.

Universal takes top three spots at domestic box office

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP FILM WRITER

Although the box office has yet to fully recover from the pandemic, at least one studio has good reason to celebrate this Fourth of July weekend. Universal Pictures currently has the top three films at the domestic box office with "F9," "The Boss Baby: Family Business" and "The Forever Purge," according to studio estimates Sunday. It's the first time that's happened for Universal since 1989, when the studio had "Sea of Love," "Parenthood" and "Uncle Buck" topping the charts, and the first time for any studio since 2005.

As expected, the "Fast & Furious" sequel "F9" maintained the top spot in its second weekend in North American theaters. The film added an estimated \$24 million over the weekend and is projected to take in \$32.7 million by the end of Monday, bringing its domestic total to \$125.8 million. Worldwide, "F9" will likely surpass the \$500 million mark on Monday.

In second place, the animated "Boss Baby" sequel surpassed expectations opening with \$17.3 million for the weekend and \$23.1 million including Monday. "The Boss



AP
This image released by Universal Pictures shows Nathalie Emmanuel, left, and Vin Diesel in a scene from "F9: The Fast Saga."

Baby: Family Business" features Alex Baldwin voicing the worldly toddler. And in third place, the latest Blumhouse venture, "The Forever Purge," is expected to gross \$12.8 million in ticket sales through Sunday and \$15.9 million over the four-day weekend.

Although the three films may share a studio name, they're also all different genres with different audience bases: A PG-13 action pic, an R-rated horror and a PG-rated family film. Almost half of the audience for "The Boss Baby 2," for example, was 12 and under, while 64% of the audience for "The Forever Purge"

was in the coveted 18 to 34 range and also very ethnically diverse.

While it's a bit unconventional for a major studio to open two big films on the same weekend, Universal's head of domestic distribution Jim Orr said they simply saw an opportunity and have historically had great successes on the Fourth of July weekend.

"This weekend is just a great glimpse of what we do constantly, which is provide theatrical audiences with a diverse slate of quality films," Orr said. "The results speak for themselves."

The varied slate, he said,

is something the studio takes great pride in.

"We have films for every single audience out there," Orr added. "We have tremendous partners, with DreamWorks and Blumhouse, and we also have some of the biggest franchises in the industry with the Fast saga."

Paramount's "A Quiet Place Part II" landed in fourth with an estimated \$4.2 million over the three-day weekend and a projected \$5.6 million including Monday, bringing its total to \$145.8 million in its sixth weekend. "The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard" took fifth with \$3 million for the weekend.

Actor Will Smith pays for July 4 fireworks in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Fireworks are returning to New Orleans on Independence Day thanks to actor Will Smith.

Smith is picking up the roughly \$100,000 tab for the pyrotechnics over the Mississippi River after learning New Orleans didn't plan a 2021 show, city officials told news outlets.

New Orleans canceled last year's fireworks because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Smith is in New Orleans working on his latest film

"Emancipation," which will tell the story of a slave, Peter, who escaped a Louisiana plantation and whose photo of scars on his back from being whipped exposed the brutality of slavery. He would also fight for the Union in the Civil War.

Smith moved production of the film from Georgia to Louisiana in early April after Georgia passed a new voting law that prompted a federal lawsuit saying the overhaul was intended to deny Black voters equal access to the ballot.

Man's pics of young models devastate wife

DEAR ABBY: I'm a woman in my early 60s. I have a husband I love very much and I enjoyed dressing sexy for him at the end of our date nights. However, I stumbled across some pictures of half-naked young models a friend of his continually sends. Because of them and the fact that my husband enjoys commenting on them, I no longer feel sexy.

I'm not a 20-something model, and now I feel like an old fool for thinking I looked good to him. I don't know how to talk to him about this matter. I wish that, just once, when his friend sent him a picture, he would have replied "No, thank you," and told his friend he already has a sexy woman in his life. Advice?

FEELING FOOLISH IN NEW YORK

DEAR FEELING FOOLISH: You are not an "old fool," you are a disappointed wife. It's time for an honest conversation. Tell your husband you found the pictures, read the comments he made to his friend in response and how it has made you feel about your own attractiveness. If you speak up, he may be able to reassure you. However, if he can't, it may require assistance from a licensed marriage and family therapist. You have my sympathy. Your problem is not uncommon.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 29-year-old woman married to a dream of a man I met when I was 19. We have a child together. We have had our ups and downs, but it's to be expected, I

suppose, when you begin a relationship before really knowing yourself.

Recently things have become complicated. I am discovering things about myself and think I may be a lesbian. I identified as bisexual for most of my life, but I'm starting to reevaluate my life now. I have become repulsed by sex with my husband. I love our family and I think he's an amazing husband, but I still feel a void. Please give me some advice.

EVOLVING IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR EVOLVING: It is not uncommon for individuals of both genders to come out later in life. You owe it to your husband to level with him about what's going on, omitting, of course, that you now find sex with him to be "repulsive." Under no circumstances should you make this about him. Tell him you no longer think you are bisexual but a lesbian, and you need to explore your true nature. Do not expect him to like it, but stand your ground. Offer him the option of counseling at the nearest LGBTQ center, and hope that he will be able to move forward with his own life soon. He may also find support by contacting the Straight Spouse Network. Its website is straightspouse.org.

DEAR ABBY: I gifted my boyfriend \$5,000 so he could get rid of his credit debt. He was really stressed, and I thought it would be a solution. Now he's buying more stuff, like he didn't

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



learn from this. I'm in a weird situation—why is he spending more? (I probably have no right to know what he has done with it.) Honestly, I don't think I'll do this again. What do you think?

SADLY MISTAKEN

DEAR SADLY MISTAKEN: Your irresponsible boyfriend is spending again because he now knows you will "rescue" him by paying his bills. This wasn't a tiny "oops," it was a big mistake. Put away your checkbook before he ruins your credit, too, and end the romance or he will bleed you dry!

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



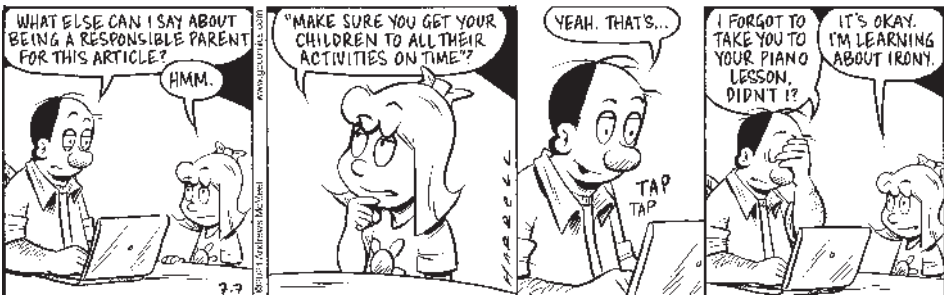
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



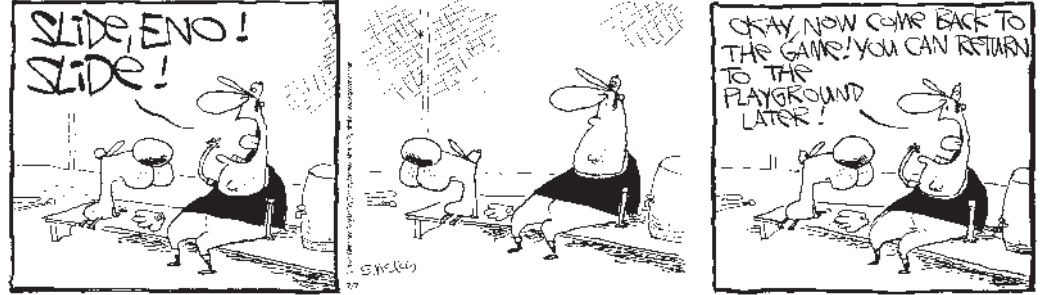
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Site of Apra Harbor

5 Chest protector

8 Grand tale

12 "To Live and Die —"

13 Bath-room, to a Brit

14 Luke's mentor

15 Rude fools

17 Son of Seth

18 Online messages

19 Rook

21 TV spots

22 "Scram!"

23 Tiara jewel

26 "Mayday!"

28 Golf clubs

31 Cattle calls?

33 Goat's plaint

35 New Age singer

36 Sandy's owner

38 Like some humor

DOWN

1 Taunt

2 "E Pluribus —"

3 —

4 Mario Puzo subject

5 Develop

6 Bit of physics

7 Autumn pears

8 Ugly building

9 Sea-plane parts

10 "American —"

11 Sherlock's assignment

16 Early automaker

20 Sashimi fish

23 "Today" rival, briefly

24 A gazillion years

25 Seasonal winds of Asia

27 Cutting tool

29 "Science guy" Bill

30 Pouch

32 Nasal passages

34 The Dutch Masters, e.g.

37 Dawn goddess

39 Pro votes

42 Jazz genre

44 Old marketplace

45 Con job

46 Little, in Livorno

48 Stir up

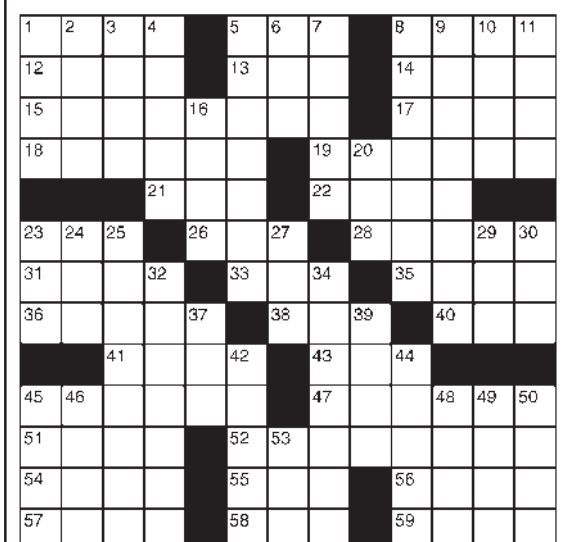
49 Concludes

50 Canadian gas brand

53 "Exodus" hero

Solution time: 23 mins.

Yesterday's answer 7-7



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Michelle Kwan, 41; Berenice Bejo, 45; Shelley Duvall, 72; Ringo Starr, 81.

Happy Birthday: Think about the possibilities, and plan to do things differently. Listen to your heart, and focus on changes that will encourage you to spend less and enjoy life more. A minimalist attitude will lower stress and encourage you to recognize what's important. Work you enjoy doing will result in peace of mind and a healthier lifestyle. Your numbers are 3, 9, 21, 24, 30, 42, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Listen and learn. An open mind will serve you well. Practice your skills until you feel confident that you can outdo any competition you encounter. A personal change will catch you off guard. A commitment will add to stability and security. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Take care of business, then move along. Don't jeopardize your health, well-being or position for someone else's gain. Putting your energy where it counts will bring rewards directly to you. Consistency will make the difference between success and failure. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You'll require discipline if you want to outsmart someone's persuasive tactics. Stick to what you know, and refuse to let anyone meddle with your plans. Handle emotional matters with class and dignity, and refrain from getting into a stalemate. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take a unique approach to work or how you handle your responsibilities, and some-

one will recognize your skills. An open-minded attitude will help you transcend from one set of circumstances to another with ease. Set a budget to avoid unnecessary stress. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Surround yourself with experienced individuals. Maintain a clear vision of what you are trying to achieve. Consistency and sensitivity to what others want will help you get things done with minimal interference. Stay fit and avoid health risks. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Pay attention. Distance yourself from anyone who appears uncertain. Set high standards and stick to a plan that you can accomplish all by yourself if necessary. Leave nothing to chance, and you'll outdo anyone who gets in your way. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Gather information. What you can contribute mentally will be the deciding factor when pitching an idea or making a presentation. Get your facts straight. Put a schedule in place that will give you ample time to fulfill your promises. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Consider your options and how best to proceed. You'll need more space at home to designate for something you wish to pursue. Stop dreaming and start putting your plan in motion. If you drag your feet, someone will intervene and take over. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Ignore what you cannot control, and explore what will help you get one step closer to your objective. Spend time with someone who sparks your interest and imagination. Let your experience keep you on your toes when

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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it comes to partnerships. ★★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't rely on anyone or anything. You are better off handling matters yourself and bringing about changes that will make you feel comfortable. Getting involved in a joint venture will be an unsettling experience. ★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take care of matters personally. Plan to spend quality time with someone you love. Home adjustments and self-improvements will fetch compliments, and discussions will bring you one step closer to the way you want to live your life. Romance is encouraged. ★★★★★

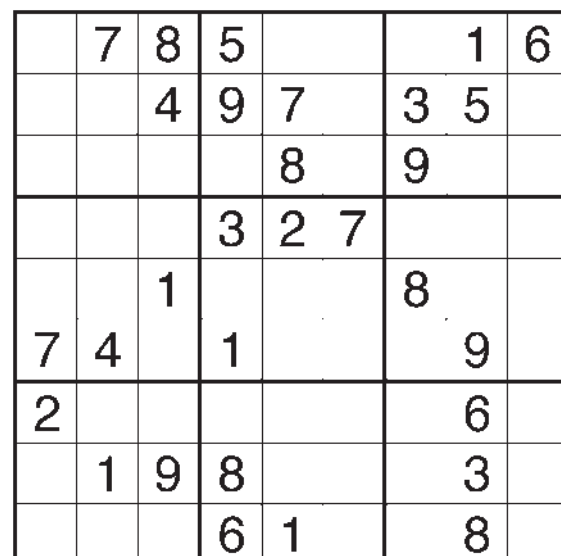
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Someone will question you if you aren't explicit regarding how you feel and what you want. Be upfront and deal with the consequences now. Choose your words carefully and ask for clarification if something sounds suspicious. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, creative and spontaneous. You are imaginative and receptive. ★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



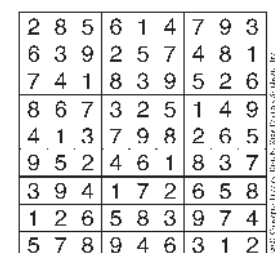
Difficulty Level ★★ ★

7/07

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



7/07

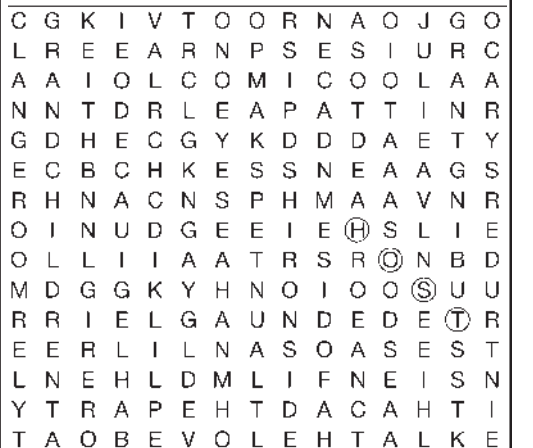
WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

GAVIN MACLEOD (1931-2021)

Solution: 10 letters



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Aced, Allan, Cary, Comic, Cool, Cruises, David, Deal, Earn, Episodes, Film, Gannon, George, Gigi, Grandchildren, Grant, Head, High Time, Host, Intruders, Ironside, Ithaca, Joan Rootvik, Julie, Keith, Kelly's Heroes, Kendig, Lange, Lucky, Meghan, Patti, Runs, Sand, Series, Site, Sound, Speaker, Stubby, Talk, Telly, The Love Boat, The Party, Tyler Moore

Yesterday's Answer: Scaloppini

Treasures 22 through 43 can be purchased online at

www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Alonso's tiebreaking double sends Mets past Brewers, 4-2



NEW YORK (AP)—Pete Alonso pulled into second base and wind-milled his big arm—a little air guitar on center stage at Citi Field.

Halfway through an injury-riddled season, the New York Mets keep hitting the right notes.

Alonso broke a seventh-inning tie with a two-run double off All-Star Brandon Woodruff, and the Mets beat the Milwaukee Brewers 4-2 on Monday night in a matchup of National League division leaders.

"I like the way we've played the entire season," New York manager Luis Rojas said. "I think we've just been consistent."

Edwin Díaz pitched out of trouble in the ninth, retiring three straight batters with two on after giving up an RBI single to Tyrone Taylor.

Michael Conforto added an RBI single and Dominic Smith had a sacrifice fly for the Mets, who managed only one hit through six innings against an efficient Woodruff (7-4).

Still, they improved to 25-11 at Citi Field with another stingy pitching performance—New York began the day with a major league-best 2.08 ERA at home.

The Mets reached the midpoint of the season with a 44-37 record that put them at least four games up in the NL East pending Monday's late games.

"Where we are now is where we want to be at the end of 162," Alonso said. "I think this team is extremely battle-tested and we've earned our spot."

"We're going to have a target on our backs for the entire second half."

Rookie right-hander Tylor Megill, with his parents in the stands for his third big league start, allowed just two hits and two walks in five impressive innings. He struck out seven.

"He's fit right in and really filled a big hole," Alonso said. "He's been super clutch for us the way he's carved guys up."

Omar Narváez homered for the Brewers, who won 11 straight before a 2-0 loss Sunday in Pittsburgh. Milwaukee entered with the best record in baseball (30-11) since May 22 and the largest cushion (seven games) of any first-place club.

Seth Lugo (2-1) struck out two in a perfect seventh, and Díaz earned his 18th save in 19 opportunities.

Díaz, idle since last Tuesday, put his first three batters on before a visit from pitching coach Jeremy Hefner. Then the closer struck out Jace Peterson and Keston Hiura before Jackie Bradley Jr. flied out to end it.

"We gave ourselves a chance, but we've got to give ourselves a chance in more in-



nings," Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell said. "I think that's kind of the message from tonight."

Hiura fanned all four times up. Narváez connected off Megill in the fourth, but the Mets responded immediately.

Woodruff had retired his first nine batters, striking out five, before Brandon Nimmo doubled leading off the Mets fourth. He advanced on a sacrifice bunt by \$341 million shortstop Francisco Lindor and scored on Smith's tying sac fly.

"I feel like right now we're hitting on all cylinders," Alonso said.

Lindor drew a leadoff walk in the seventh and dashed to third on Smith's single. Alonso, who homered in both ends of a day-night double-header the Mets split Sunday at Yankee Stadium, lined the next pitch into left field and celebrated when he reached second base.

"That's just high-quality championship baseball," Alonso said. "Execution was perfect."

One out later, Conforto snapped an 0-for-13 skid with a run-scoring single that made it 4-1.

"I just started catching too much of the plate," Woodruff said. "We're still playing good baseball."

Red Sox 5, Angels 4

In Los Angeles, Rafael Devers hit a two-run homer and drove in three runs, and Boston retired Shohei Ohtani on a grounder to right field with two Angels on base for the final out.

Christian Arroyo also homered for the AL-leading Red Sox, who held Ohtani to a single on his 27th birthday.

Jose Rojas homered and added an RBI single in the

ninth for the Angels.

Adam Ottavino secured his seventh save.

Martín Pérez (7-4) made it into the sixth inning for the Red Sox, giving up just one earned run on eight hits.

José Suarez (3-2) threw 75 pitches, but made it through only three innings in his first start of the season for the Angels.

Cardinals 5, Giants 3

In San Francisco, Kwang Hyun Kim pitched seven scoreless innings, Matt Carpenter hit a two-run triple in the seventh for the first runs of the game and St. Louis snapped San Francisco's three-game winning streak.

Kim (3-5) allowed three hits with two strikeouts and two walks.

Donovan Solano and Steven Duggar hit RBI singles in the ninth against Alex Reyes, but San Francisco's comeback bid fell short.

Giants starter Kevin Gausman (8-3) didn't allow a hit until Nolan Arenado's one-out single in the seventh that started a two-run rally in what had been a scoreless game.

Alex Dickerson slugged a pinch-hit homer that held up on replay review.

Pirates 11, Braves 1

In Pittsburgh, Ben Gamel homered twice and drove in six runs to lead Pittsburgh past Atlanta.

Gamel took Max Fried (5-5) over the fence in center field for a two-run home run in the fourth, doubled home Bryan Reynolds in the sixth and added a three-run shot in the seventh as the Pirates won their second straight following a six-game losing streak.

Chase De Jong (1-3) survived a 36-pitch first inning

to pick up the second victory of his five-year major-league career. De Jong struck out four and walked three to notch his first win since beating the Chicago White Sox on Sept. 28, 2018, while with Minnesota.

Ke'Bryan Hayes hit his first home run in nearly a month for Pittsburgh as the Pirates tied their season-high in runs.

Ronald Acuña and Freddie Freeman had two hits apiece for Atlanta. The rest of the Braves managed just two hits against De Jong and four relievers.

Marlins 5, Dodgers 4

In Miami, Jorge Alfaro hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning, and Miami ended Los Angeles' nine-game winning streak.

Alfaro drove a slider from Dodgers reliever Victor González (3-1) to center field for his third homer of the season.

David Hess (1-0) picked up the win in his Marlins' debut. Anthony Bender pitched a scoreless ninth for his first major league save.

The Marlins erased a 2-0 deficit with a three-run third on RBI singles by Garrett Cooper and Miguel Rojas.

Dodgers starter Walker Buehler allowed four runs on five hits and struck out six in five innings. The right-hander walked two and hit a batter.

Twins 8, White Sox 5

In Minneapolis, rookie Bailey Ober pitched five scoreless innings for his first major league victory, Max Kepler homered twice and Minnesota held off Chicago.

Ober (1-1) hit the milestone in his seventh career start, with seven strikeouts and two hits and three walks allowed.

White Sox starter Dylan Cease (7-4) lasted 5 1/3 in-

nings and allowed six hits and three walks.

Hansel Robles pitched a scoreless ninth for his eighth save.

Rays 9, Indians 8

In St. Petersburg, Fla., Brandon Lowe hit his first career grand slam in the second inning, and Tampa Bay rallied with two runs in the ninth to beat Cleveland.

Manuel Margot had four hits before leaving the game after appearing to hurt his leg in the ninth.

Pete Fairbanks (2-3) worked a scoreless ninth. Emmanuel Clase (3-4) took the loss.

Franmil Reyes homered and drove in five runs for the Indians, who have lost seven straight.

Phillies 13, Cubs 3

In Chicago, Odúbel Herrera hit a three-run homer, and Philadelphia went deep five times while handing Chicago its 10th straight loss.

Andrew Knapp, Didi Gregorius, Rhys Hoskins and Alec Bohm also homered.

The Cubs remained winless since Zach Davies and three relievers combined to no-hit the Dodgers in Los Angeles on June 24.

Herrera's drive against reliever Kohl Stewart capped a six-run eighth that broke open a 4-2 game. Andrew McCutchen had three hits and scored two runs.

Javier Báez smacked his 19th home run and an RBI double. Jake Marisnick also homered. Rex Brothers (2-2) took the loss.

Tigers 7, Rangers 3

In Arlington, Texas, Willy Peralta threw seven scoreless innings in his longest big league outing since 2016 and Detroit beat Texas.

Milwaukee Brewers starting pitcher Brandon Woodruff, center, reacts as New York Mets' Francisco Lindor and Dominic Smith, left, celebrate after scoring on a double by Pete Alonso during the seventh inning of a baseball game, Monday, July 5, 2021, in New York.

Zack Short homered for the Tigers, who have won three in a row and five of six. Former Rangers outfielder Nomar Mazara twice drove in a run without a hit.

Peralta (2-1), back in the majors only three weeks, struck out six without a walk while throwing 61 of 91 pitches for strikes. He allowed only three hits in his fourth start for Detroit.

Kolby Allard (2-5) struck out a career-high nine in his 5 1/3 innings, and only two of the five runs scored against the Texas lefty were earned.

Reds 6, Royals 2

In Kansas City, Mo., Eugenio Suarez hit a tiebreaking three-run home run shortly after Nick Castellanos hit a tying solo shot and Cincinnati beat Kansas City for its fifth straight win.

Suarez hit a 1-1 pitch for a homer to give his team a three-run lead in the seventh inning.

Vladimir Gutierrez (4-3) went six innings and gave up two runs, five hits and two walks with six strikeouts.

Mike Minor (6-7) pitched well until the seventh inning when Castellanos turned on the first pitch he saw, tying the score at 2-all. Minor pitched six innings, allowing three hits, three walks and four earned runs with six strikeouts.

Nationals 7, Padres 5

In San Diego, in his first swing since being named an All-Star, Trea Turner drove a pitch from Joe Musgrove into the second deck in left field at Petco Park.

The loud homer announced Turner's return from missing four games with a jammed left middle finger and helped the Washington Nationals beat the San Diego Padres 7-5 on Monday night.

The Nationals raved about how important it is to have Turner in their lineup. He hadn't played since getting hurt on Wednesday.

"That was awesome," manager Dave Martinez said. "I mean, we talked to him before the game, we watched him swing, he said he felt pretty good so he came through for us tonight. He wants to play. He wants to be out there every day. He doesn't ask me for days off, he goes out there and plays the game the right way. Now you can see why he's an All-Star."

Turner said his finger is still a little sore "but overall I feel confident."

Finally! Bucks, Suns set for the NBA Finals after long waits



PHOENIX (AP)—Chris Paul walked up the stairs and took a seat in front of the NBA Finals logo, a climb that took him 16 years to complete.

The Phoenix Suns and Milwaukee Bucks are used to enduring long waits.

They came into the NBA together in 1968 and between them have managed to win one championship. They've combined for only one trip to the finals since the mid-1970s.

Now here they both are, a couple of unfamiliar contestants to finish off a most unusual season.

"Walking into here, seeing Mr. Larry on every poster," Suns center Deandre Ayton said, referring to the Larry O'Brien Trophy, "it gave me goosebumps."

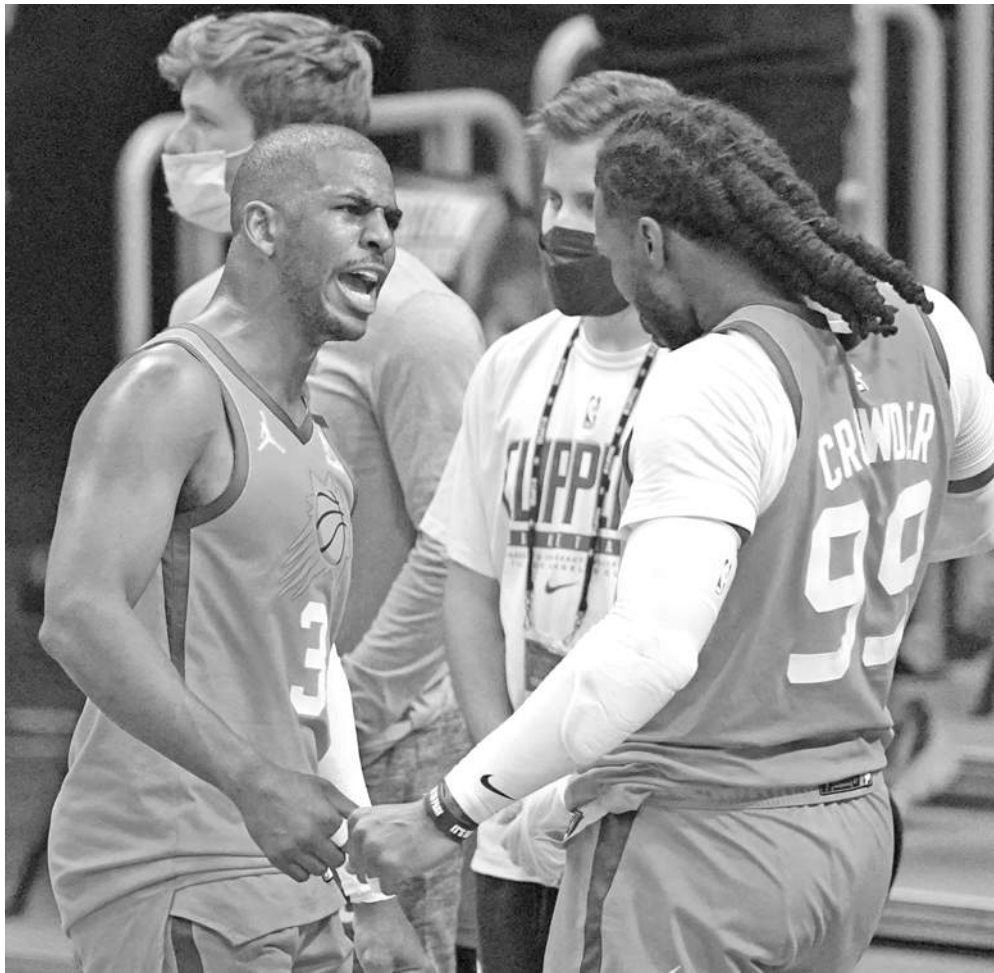
Imagine the feeling if he's on the first Suns team to win an NBA championship.

Game 1 is Tuesday night in Phoenix, which hasn't hosted an NBA Finals game since Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls completed their first three-peat here in 1993. The Suns' only other chance was in 1976, when they lost to Boston.

Giannis Antetokounmpo's status remains unknown, with Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer saying he had no update on the injured superstar's knee.

"Without him, we have to do it by committee," Bucks guard Khris Middleton said.

It's a whole new setting for the 36-year-old Paul, who acknowledged one of the differences. Home teams usually practice at their training



Phoenix Suns guard Chris Paul, left, and forward Jae Crowder celebrates as time runs out in Game 6 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Finals against the Los Angeles Clippers Wednesday, June 30, 2021, in Los Angeles.

fending champion Lakers in the first round, swept MVP Nikola Jokic's Denver Nuggets and then shook off the absence of Paul for two games to beat the Clippers in the Western Conference finals.

Paul was out for coronavirus health and safety protocols, which every team had to work around this season. Numerous stars also dealt with injuries and the Bucks are hoping Antetokounmpo can overcome his.

The two-time MVP missed Games 5 and 6 of the East finals after hyperextending his left knee when he leaped to defend a lob in Game 4, but Middleton and Holiday led the Bucks past Atlanta in both games.

"I think guys have done a great job of adjusting with him out, with him not out there in two of the most important games of our season," Middleton said.

Some things to know about the series:

GIANNIS UPDATE

Budenholzer didn't give many details on Antetokounmpo, beyond saying he was getting better.

"He did court work, so he's making progress and we're pleased he's making progress," Budenholzer said.

SEASON SERIES

The Suns won a pair of games that were as close as can be. Their 125-124 home victory on Feb. 10 came when Antetokounmpo scored a season-high 47 points but missed a jumper at the buzzer, and they pulled out a 128-127 victory in Milwaukee on April 19 when Booker knocked down a free throw with 0.3 seconds remaining in overtime.

FLYING INTO THE FINALS

The Bucks haven't been behind since Game 4 of the East finals, never trailing in either of the last two games. Nine of the 12 wins in the postseason for the NBA's highest-scoring team have come by double digits.

CROWDER'S CHANCE

With both franchises being absent so long, the Suns' Jae Crowder is the only player on either side with NBA Finals experience. He played for the Miami Heat when they lost last year to the Lakers.

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity, but I'm looking for a different outcome than I had last time honestly," the forward said. "That's all fine that I've been here before, but I haven't won anything."

FOES TO FRIENDS

Booker will often be matched up against Holiday or Middleton, and after the series ends they will all get on a plane together. All three are set to play in the Olympics for the U.S. team, which will start practicing without them this week before heading to Tokyo.

PHOENIX (AP)—While the 3-point shot has unquestionably changed the NBA game, during these finals the star of the show might be the mid-range jumper.

Yes, the regular old 2-point shot will get some love in this series.

Milwaukee's Khris Middleton and Phoenix's Devin Booker and Chris Paul all excel at 12-to 18-foot pullups, which is a lost art for many players who focus on 3-pointers or dunks.

"A lot of coaches' and teams' schemes, they want you to shoot threes and layups," Middleton said. "That's what a lot of teams expect you to do. But when you stop sometimes, they just don't expect it. It gives you a clean look."

"So if you work on it, it almost seems like a layup or a three-point shot for myself."

Sounds simple enough and there are players in the NBA Finals who make it look easy. It might be one reason Booker and Middleton are two of the more overlooked All-Stars in the league. Perfecting the 15-foot baseline jumper isn't exactly every kid's dream lately

facility, but the workout on the eve of the NBA Finals is in the arena.

"It's still basketball," the point guard said. "I think we're all locked in to the goal at hand."

Milwaukee won a championship in 1971, so long ago that Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was still known as Lew Alcindor when he and Oscar Robertson were perhaps the top tandem in the league. The Bucks had drafted Alcindor with the No. 1 pick in 1969 after winning a coin flip against the Suns.

The Bucks got back in 1974

but haven't been seen in the finals since.

They have been closing in over the last few years. Milwaukee had the best record in the NBA in both 2018-19 and 2019-20 and was two games away from the NBA Finals in that first season. They came back better after acquiring guard Jrue Holiday before this season.

"To get these four wins is going to be difficult but really excited for it," Holiday said.

The Suns had been going nowhere, not even making the playoffs since 2010. They

were 19-63 just two seasons ago, tying for the second-worst record in the league.

But an undefeated run in their eight restart games in the Walt Disney World bubble last summer sent them into this season with momentum, and they entered it with a new leader when they acquired Paul from Oklahoma City.

Besides Paul's All-Star play, the Suns needed the right veteran to bring out the best in young stars Devin Booker and Ayton. Phoenix finished with the second-best record in the league, knocked out the de-

Mid-range jumpers could be the rage during NBA Finals

when they're shooting hoops in the driveway.

But Booker and Middleton have it down to a science — along with a healthy respect for one another.

"He's just a guy that hits tough shots, a guy that can score from the three, the mid-range and the paint, a guy that can get to the free throw line," Middleton said of Booker. "He's a guy that really can score in every single way, which is tough to guard because you don't know when he's going to stop and shoot, when he's going to keep going, when he's going to look to create for others."

LONG ROAD BACK

The NBA Finals are special anytime, but this year one reason is just because they're happening.

Multiple teams had their schedules altered because of coronavirus guidelines and protocols. Arenas were eerily empty for much of the season.

LeBron James and other players were irritated about the condensed schedule, which led to questions about the unusual high number of start players going down with injuries across the league. James also wasn't a fan of a hastily arranged All-Star Game.

But the NBA Finals are set to tipoff in front of near-capacity crowds.

And through it all, Paul's fingerprints can be found everywhere.

As president of the NBA players' union, he balances the concerns of around 450 players.

"Everything that's good for this guy and that guy might not be the same for that guy, but everything has always been a conversation and it's going to continue to be that way," Paul said. "So if people don't like it, then you know everybody has the same opportunity to be a part of all these conversations."

TUMMY TROUBLE

The Suns were without key

reserve Cameron Johnson in their closeout Game 6 win over the Los Angeles Clippers because of a poorly-timed bout with food poisoning.

Johnson said the worst part — other than not being on the court — was that his tummy trouble was so widely discussed.

"It's like everyone in the world knows, so can't even take my 'L' in peace and silence," Johnson said.

Johnson said he should be ready for Game 1 on Tuesday. He said even after he got sick, he had no doubt the Suns were going to close out the Clippers in Los Angeles.

"I felt really, really comfortable with what our guys are capable of, and I definitely watched the game with kind of an aura of peace knowing that we're going to take care of it," Johnson said.

ON THE WHISTLE

Veterans Scott Foster, Tony Brothers, James Capers and

Marc Davis are among the 14 who have been selected as officials in the NBA Finals.

Foster will be making 14th Finals appearance. Brothers, Capers and Davis are in their 10th.

Finals officials are selected by the NBA's Referee Operations management team based on how they performed during the first three rounds of the playoffs.

Games involving Foster could be must-see TV. Paul and Foster have clashed in the past and the point guard has made it no secret that he's not a fan of the referee. Paul has lost 11 straight playoff games that Foster has officiated.

DOUBLE AGENT

Bucks point guard Jrue Holiday and former Bucks teammate Torrey Craig talked earlier this season about their shared goal of making the NBA Finals.

They did it.

With different teams.

Craig was traded to Phoenix

midway through the season and he's become a key rotation player off the bench. He has the unique perspective of being very familiar with both rosters. Holiday said he's happy for Craig.

"He's fighting for the same thing we're fighting for," Holiday said. "But we'd love to beat him."

BY THE NUMBERS

1—Player on either team who has played in the NBA Finals. That would be Phoenix forward Jae Crowder, who made it last year with the Heat. No player on either team has won a title.

5—Seasons that Bucks forward P.J. Tucker played from 2012-17 with the Suns early in his career.

70.6%—Suns forward Deandre Ayton's shooting percentage in these playoffs. Ayton is just 22 years old and won't celebrate his 23rd birthday until July 23, which is the day after a potential Game 7.

1968 — The year the Bucks and Suns both joined the NBA as expansion teams.

Albert looking forward to Season 3 of 3x3

By MARK RABAGO

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Mariana Islands Basketball League commissioner Clint Albert couldn't be happier on how the 3x3 Season 2 tournament turned out and said he's already looking forward to organizing Season 3 of the competition.

"We are very happy that we were able to run and finish Season 2 of the MIBL 3x3. We had more teams that

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goals (35th and 60th minute)

Anton Megino tallied the two goals for Matansa, which has yet to make it to the win column as it settled for a draw against Shirley's FC during the opening week of the league. Megino had one goal against Shirley's, while Yutaka Kadokura scored the other one. Shirley's pair came from Bennet Haro.

Shirley's 5, Kanoa 1

Shirley's secured win No. 1 in its second try after outclassing Kanoa FC last weekend.

Bennet Haro also logged two goals in their victory over Kanoa, while Gauis Ranada, Jackielyn Calage, and Frank Lumanlang chipped in one apiece.

Jayson Tagabuel made the only goal for Kanoa, which absorbed its second loss in as many games, as it also dropped its opener to TanHoldings, 0-11.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

MLB STANDINGS

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	54	32	.628	—
Tampa Bay	49	36	.576	4½
Toronto	43	39	.524	9
New York	42	41	.506	10½
Baltimore	27	57	.321	26

Central Division

Chicago	49	35	.583	—
Cleveland	42	40	.512	6
Detroit	39	46	.459	10½
Minnesota	35	48	.422	13½
Kansas City	35	49	.417	14

West Division

Houston	52	33	.612	—
Oakland	49	37	.570	3½
Seattle	45	40	.529	7
Los Angeles	42	42	.500	9½
Texas	33	52	.388	19

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

New York	44	37	.543	—
Washington	41	42	.494	4
Atlanta	41	43	.488	4½
Philadelphia	40	42	.488	4½
Miami	36	47	.434	9

Central Division

Milwaukee	51	35	.593	—
Cincinnati	44	40	.524	6
Chicago	42	43	.494	8½
St. Louis	42	44	.488	9
Pittsburgh	31	53	.369	19

West Division

San Francisco	53	31	.631	—
Los Angeles	53	32	.624	½
San Diego	50	37	.575	4½
Colorado	37	48	.435	16½
Arizona	23	63	.267	31

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mariana Islands Basketball League commissioner Clint Albert speaks to players on Day 1 of the 3x3 Season 2 tournament last June 26 at the Agape Christian School Gym along Middle Road.

sors were Cristianos and IT&E, while the "All Stars" sponsors were Eats Easy, The Game, Shirley's Coffee Shop, Hot Deals, The Angry Penne, and Latte Built Gym.

Albert also took the opportunity to extend a shout out to Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia), Inc. for providing Powerade throughout the two-day tournament, Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation for donating the 3x3 balls, Marianas High School and Agape Christian School for serving as the venue, DJ Kevin Razon, and Victoria De Leon Guerrero who served as their official photographer.

"I also want to thank Typhoon Sports Association on Tinian for joining the 3x3 competition and the referees and the rest of the organizing committee for doing a great job. And of course, to all players for putting on a show and to all the fans who supported the event," he said.

Hole in the Wall, Dream Girls, and Rollers won the men's open, women's, and 16-and-under division of the 3x3 Season 2 tournament, respectively, while Santos defeated Eric Joe in the finals of the slam dunk competition.

joined than what we expected. Hoping Season 3 would be bigger and better," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

The MIBL official said coming into the tournament he didn't have any doubts they would be able to successfully pull off the 3x3 tournament. He, however, admitted having butterflies in his stomach on the slam dunk competition, which was a first in the CNMI.

"We believe the tournament ran smoothly and with no significant issues. I was personally

worried about how the slam dunk exhibition would turn out as it was the first done on island. Thankfully it turned out great due to the great job Coby Santos, Mac Mintac, and Eric Joe did for the very supportive crowd," said Albert.

Albert said the 3x3 format has slowly become a favorite of MIBL because of its flexibility and it doesn't really run as long as the traditional 5x5 format.

"The advantage for us is that the 3x3 is a faster turnaround meaning our work load as the organizing body does not run for months as compared to running a 5x5 league. In terms of running the games, the 3x3 also gives as an opportunity to run different divisions like the women's and 16-and-under divisions unlike the 5x5 which you would normally focus on one division at a time, most of the time it's the

men's open age division," said Albert.

While 3x3 was relatively easier to organize than 5x5, the MIBL official said overseeing a tournament in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic still presented challenges.

"Of course the major difference is the protocols we needed to put in place and our responsibility to make sure that we keep everyone's health and safety a top priority," he said.

The MIBL 3x3 Season 2 tournament's "MVP" spon-

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plug on the 2021 season, a number of teams were raring and gearing to bring baseball back to the islands.

"Some of the board members estimated from five to eight teams were still looking to start the 2021 season. I know there's a lot of interest for baseball to get going again from a lot of players but sadly we couldn't get that going because of the field," he said.

While the 2021 season is now a lost cause, Santos is crossing his fingers that the SBL could start the 2022 season by January next year so they can adequately prepare the CNMI national baseball team for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games that will be played in home soil.

"Currently, the best-case scenario is they start construction and hopefully the renovations would be completed before the end of the year and we start a league in January and field a national team that

can compete versus other SBL teams. Because the biggest thing in baseball is repetition, its competition, it's the need for these guys to hit the field and compete against each other. If we don't get that before the Mini Games next year then it's going to be a huge challenge for our national team," he said.

NMSA executive director Carline Sablan gave Santos and SBL a glimmer of hope when she told *Saipan Tribune* that the group's timeline has renovations for the baseball field com-

pleted before the end of 2021.

"[We expect that] all needed repairs will be completed by December this year," she said in a social media message.

While NMSA doesn't have estimates on the total cost of the renovations for the "Tan Ko" field, Sablan said Federal Emergency Management Agency funds will be used for the repairs necessary to successfully host the baseball event for the Mini Games next year with other improvements to be taken out from \$21.2-million grant to rebuild

the Oleai Sports Complex awarded by the Economic Development Administration.

She added that in particular parts of the centrally located baseball field that need repairs include the press box, lighting, fencing, scoreboard, in-field repairs, dugouts, restrooms, shortening of sidelines, warning tracks in the outfield, covering or awning for spectator seating, bullpen, and the installation of artificial turf or a hybrid like Palau's baseball field, among others.

TECHNICAL

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tions," he said.

Triathlon Association of the CNMI secretary general Ricky Castro, meanwhile, welcomed Damien's appointment to help oversee the CNMI's hosting of the triathlon event for next year's Pacific Mini Games, which marks the islands' first-ever hosting of the quadrennial event.

"Let's welcome our new member: Stephen Damien from PNG, the technical delegate for the triathlon events at

the 2022 Pacific Mini Games in the CNMI," wrote Castro in a message to TRAC's members on social media.

For his part, Damien said he's absolutely delighted with the appointment. "I'm looking forward to working with the CNMI in hosting this event. I hope to impart my knowledge and skills with the triathlon community there and also pick up any experience there as well."

He added that it's not the first time he will be working with the sport of triathlon in the CNMI even though he has

yet to visit the U.S. territory.

"I worked with the CNMI triathlon community in the past through the Pacific Islands Triathlon & Cycling Championships. I don't know if some of these officials are still there. If not, I'm looking forward to making new friends there."

Damien has been organizing triathlon events since the mid 2000s with his first Pacific Games technical duties happening in the 2009 Pacific Mini Games in Cook Islands.

"I've since worked as technical delegate in the 2011 Pacific Games in Noumea,

sports competition manager for the triathlon in the 2015 Pacific Games in PNG, and chief race official during the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa," he said.

Damien added that he also officiated in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and other International Triathlon Union races in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom as well as organized smaller regional triathlon and cycling events in PNG in addition to taking PNG triathlon teams to Fiji, Guam, and Australia.

"I'm confident the CNMI will have a strong pool of triathlon organizers. This should make organizing the triathlon event easy. Hopefully I can share my experience and knowledge with the team and theirs with me. I'm confident we can host a great triathlon event," he said.

TRAC president Manny Si-tchon said it's usual protocol to send a technical delegate for regional events like the Mini Games next year and that he's happy that World Triathlon this early appointed Damien to the post.



Alonso's tiebreaking
double sends Mets
past Brewers, 4-2

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Albert looking
forward for Season
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

SBL scraps 2021 season

By MARK RABAGO
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Fresh from celebrating the country's 245th birthday, the Saipan Baseball League has scrapped the 2021 season of America's favorite pastime due to pending renovations at the Francisco "Tan Ko" M. Palacios Baseball Field.

SBL president Jay Santos last Friday delivered the unfortunate news that the local baseball federation has decided to cancel this



year's men's baseball league.

"The 2021 season has been scuttled. There will be no baseball this year. We've hoped to start up

the season at least a mini-season last May, but there are some pending renovations happening at the field," he said in an interview with *Saipan Tribune*.

Santos said the Northern Marianas Sports Association, the islands' umbrella sports organization, told SBL about the unavailability of the Palacios baseball field, which has not been the same since Super Typhoon Yutu wrought havoc on the facilities in 2018.

"We were advised by NMSA that we wouldn't be allowed to use the field because those renovations are happening soon. I wasn't able to get an update on when the renovations will start but I was hoping it would be sooner than later."

Santos said that before SBL decided to ultimately pull the

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Technical delegate for triathlon appointed

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Papua New Guinea's Stephen Damien has been appointed the technical delegate for the triathlon event at the 2022 Mini Pacific Games in the CNMI.



Oceania Triathlon Union continental development coordinator Phil Dally announced Damien's appointment by World Triathlon in an email to Pacific Games Council chief executive officer Andrew Minogue.

"We are particularly pleased as Stephen first became involved as part of the PNG team when Port Moresby hosted the Pacific Games in 2015 and was a

highly valued member of the technical team at the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa," read Dally's email.

Dally added that Damien's appointment comes in step with the Oceania Triathlon Union's efforts to have homegrown officials help oversee competitions in regional events.

"A great example to other members of the national federations in the Oceania Region and meets one of the goals that Oceania has worked toward, to have internationally accredited and recognized technical officials from the Pacific na-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Stephen Damien, left, has been appointed by World Triathlon to serve as technical delegate for the triathlon event at the 2022 Mini Pacific Games in CNMI.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

In this 2019 file photo, the Chalan Kanoa Bears' Jose Lizama delivers a pitch, while the Mariners' Eli Augenbaugh gets ready to sprint to third base during Game 2 of their finals series in the Saipan Baseball League at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Back-to-back wins for Paire

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Paire Football Club made it two in a row in the co-ed U12 division of the NMIFA Summer Youth League 2021 after nosing out TanHoldings Football Club, 2-1, last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Rodney Junior Tomei made both goals for Paire, scoring his first in the 10th minute and the second in the 23rd. Kay Anne Costales posted the lone goal for TanHoldings when she hit her target three minutes after Towei lit up the board anew.

Tomei also had twin goals in Paire's 4-1 victory over MP United FC in the opening of the league last June 26. Justidy Mizutani delivered the two other goals in Paire's first win, while MP United's only goal was courtesy of Moshe Sikkell.

MP United 6, Matansa 2
MP United recovered quickly



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A Paire Football Club player, right, dribbles in front of an MP United FC defender during their co-ed U12 division game in the opening week of the NMIFA Summer Youth League 2021 last June 26 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

from its opening week loss after topping Matansa.

Sikkell and Taiga Namai-Scoggins teamed up in lifting MP United past Matansa af-

ter firing three goals apiece. Sikkell scored in streaks with his goals posted in the 11th, 16th, and 20th minute. Namai-Scoggins started thing out for

MP United after scoring in the fourth minute and wrapped up the match with back-to-back

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